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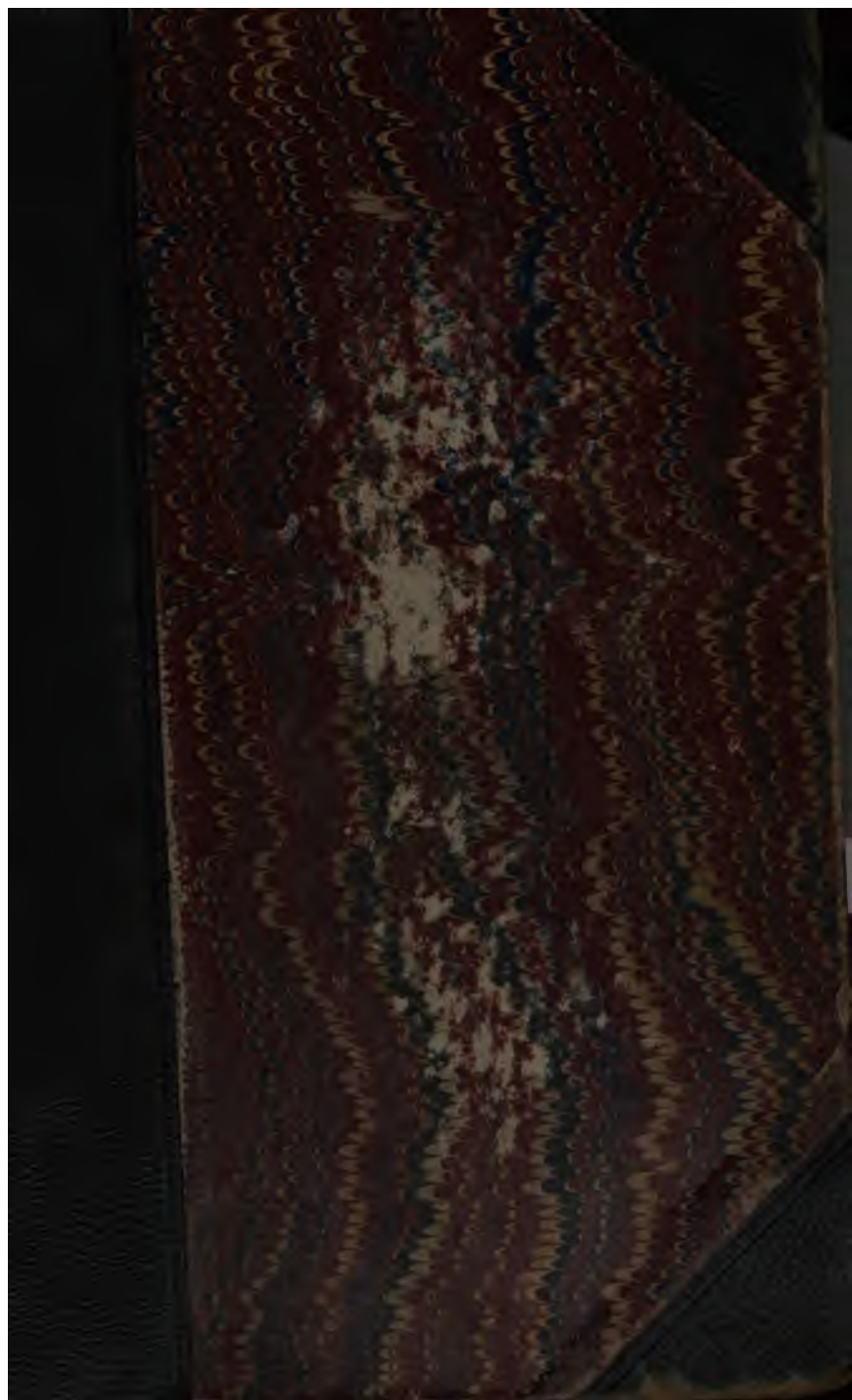
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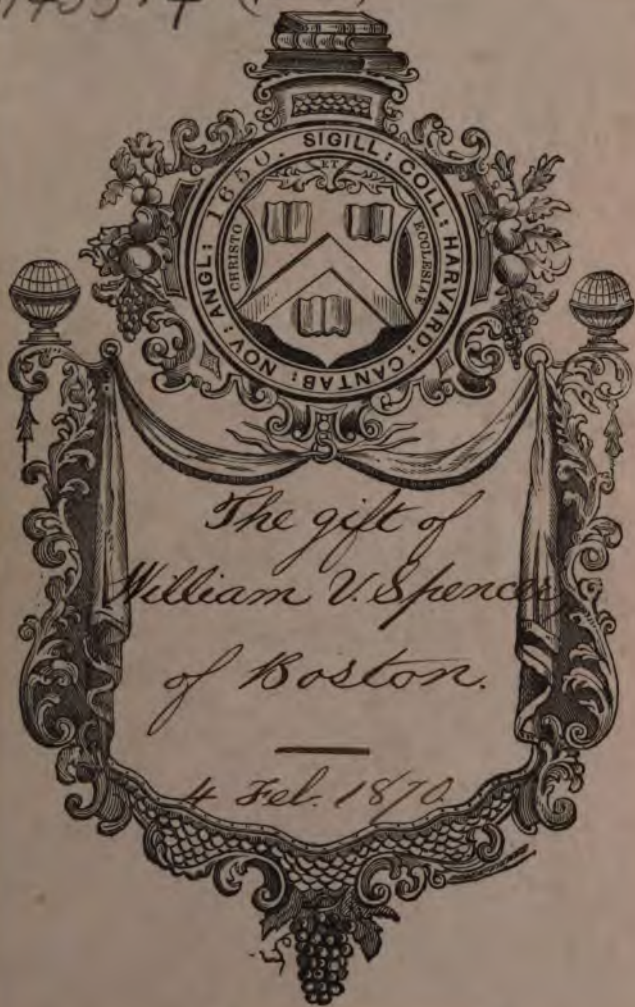
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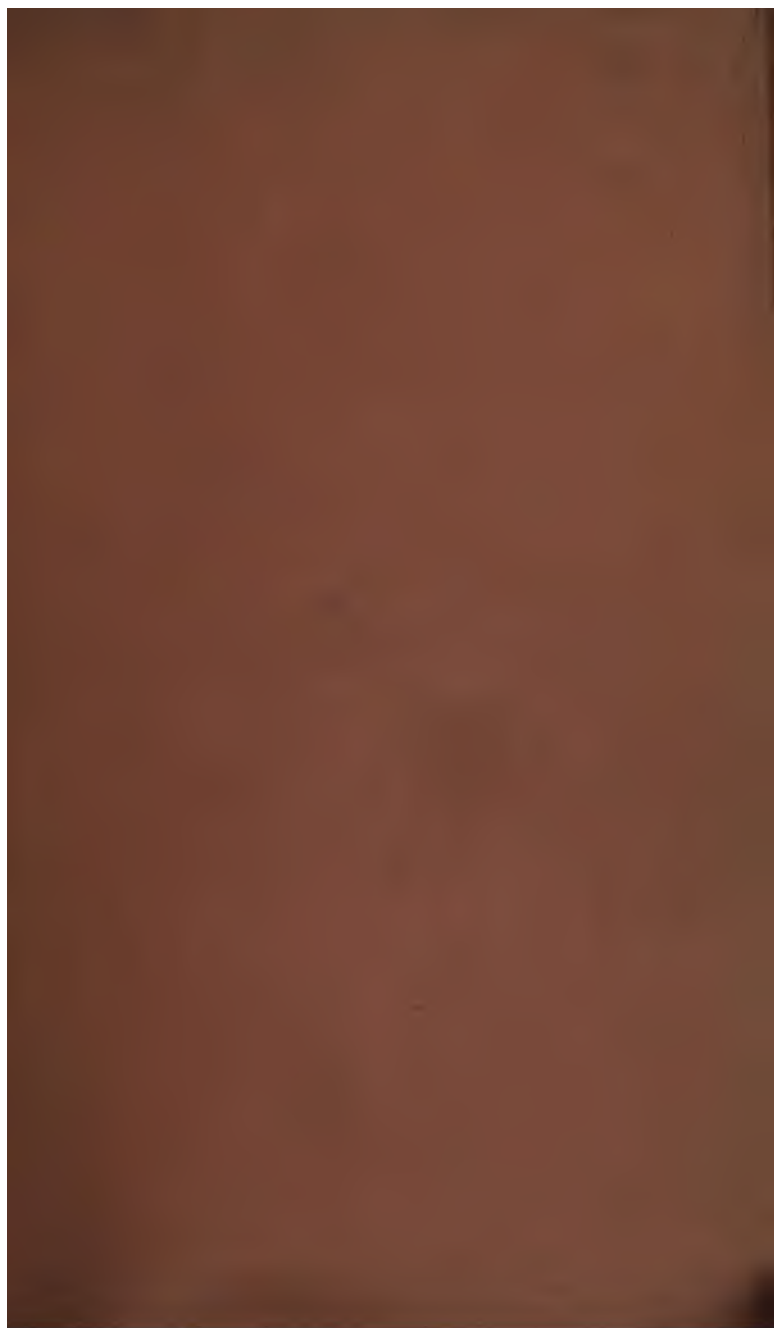
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[Price 15 cents.]

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A Farce, in One Act.

BY J. M. MORTON.

BOSTON:
CHARLES H. SPENCER,

203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1867.

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OR,

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[No. 13.]

AUNT CHARLOTTE'S MAID.

143

A FARCE.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

John Maddison

J. M. MORTON, Esq.



BOSTON:

CHARLES H. SPENCER,

203 WASHINGTON STREET.

11435. 4

1870, Feb. 4.
Gift of
Thos. V. Spencer,
of Boston.

AUNT CHARLOTTE'S MAID.

CHARACTERS.

	<i>London, Adelphi Theatre, 1858.</i>	<i>Boston Museum, 1865.</i>
HORATIO THOMAS SPARKINS . .	Mr. B. Webster.	Mr. F. Hardenburg.
MAJOR VOLLEY	Mr. Selby.	Mr. R. F. McClannin.
PIVOT (<i>A Lawyer</i>)	Mr. C. J. Smith.	Mr. Woolf.
MRS. PUDDIFOOT	Mrs. Chatterley.	Miss M. Parker.
FANNY VOLLEY	Miss Hayman.	Mrs. T. M. Hunter.
MATILDA JONES (<i>Aunt Charlotte's Maid</i>)	Mrs. F. Williams.
	Guests, &c., &c.	

SCENE — LONDON.

MODERN COSTUMES.

AUNT CHARLOTTE'S MAID.

SCENE. — *An Apartment. Large door in flat, R., with a double curtain hanging on each side of it — at L. in flat, a door leading into a conservatory, which is seen beyond — at L. U. E., the general door of entrance — between this door and L. 1 E. a fireplace — doors, R. U. E. and R. 2 E. — a piano, sofa, easy chair, table, &c. &c.*

MATILDA JONES *discovered dusting the furniture. Enter MRS. PUDDI-FOOT, door, L. U. E.*

Mrs. P. (as she enters.) Tilda! Tilda, I say.

Matil. Matilda, if you please, ma'am! I'm rather particular about my *Mat*. You were going to say *summut*, ma'am?

Mrs. P. *Summut*! it's really high time you left off murdering the Queen's English in that way, Tilda.

Matil. *Mat*, please ma'am!

Mrs. P. You have now been three months in my service, where the very best English is always spoken — the pure unadulterated mother tongue.

Matil. Well, mum, in three months more I shall speak your mother's tongue, like one o'clock, as your nephew, Mr. Horatio Thomas, calls it.

Mrs. P. "Like one o'clock!" My nephew may use words which you may not. I engaged you from a serious family in the country, where, I am sure, you could not have picked up any such expressions!

Matil. No, ma'am, I never picked up nothing there, 'cause they never kept no company.

Mrs. P. Now listen to me, Tilda — I mean *Mat-ilda*!

Matil. Yes, ma'am!

Mrs. P. I'm going out — how do I look?

Matil. Jolly!

Mrs. P. "Jolly!" Well, there's no harm in *that* expression. Now listen — I shall not be back till late.

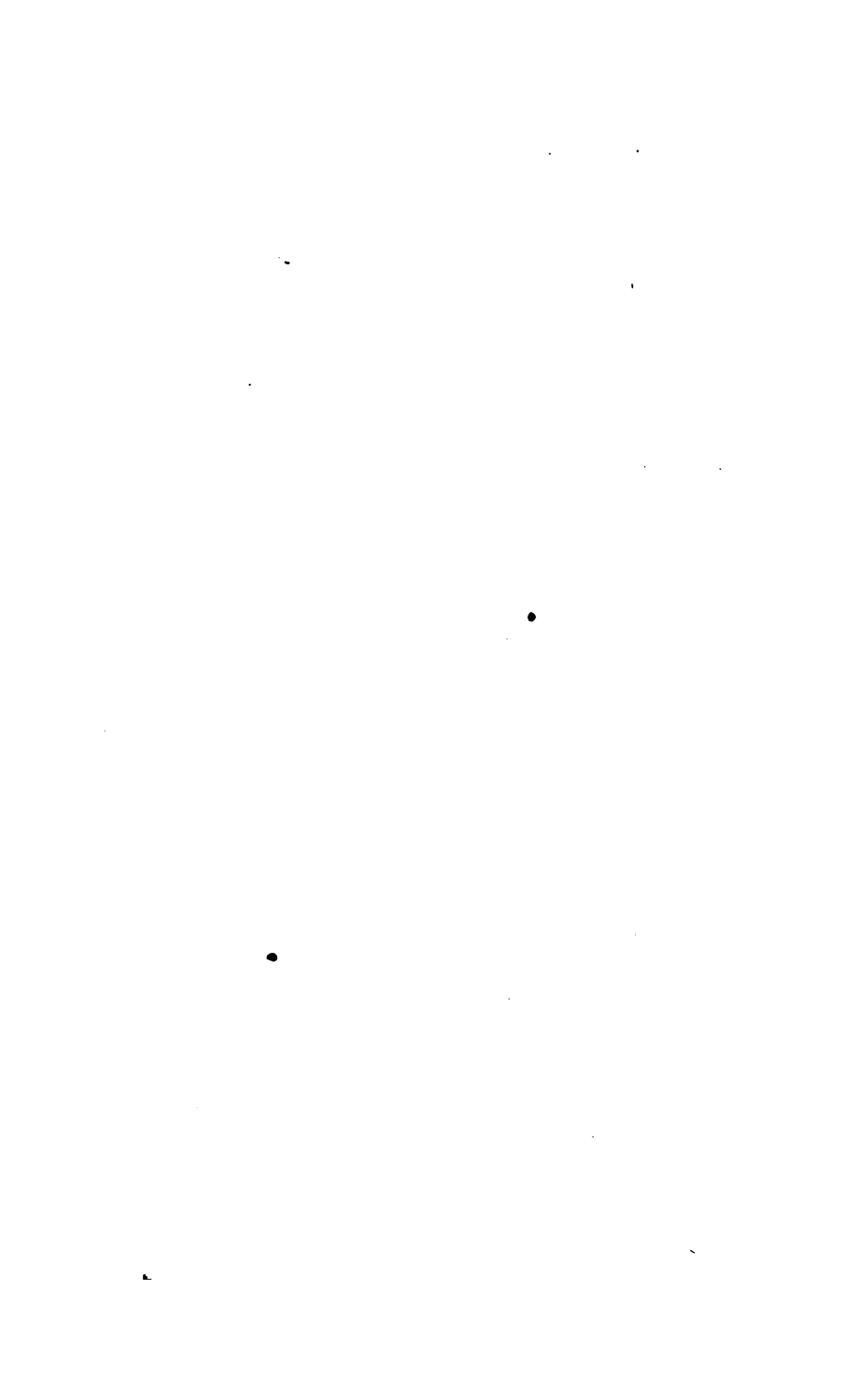
Matil. Eight, ma'am?

Mrs. P. *Late!* but I can trust you, for you never talk to the policeman as the generality of London servants do!

Matil. Not I, ma'am. (*aside.*) I prefers the *butcher*.

Mrs. P. In short, you've too much respect for yourself!

Matil. I believe you, my boy.



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Matil. He's not a dragoon.

Spark. I didn't say he was a dragoon! I repeat, where did you pick up that Sapper and Miner?

Matil. He's a Life Guardsman.

Spark. I said a Life Guardsman.

Matil. He don't come here for me — he is fat Sarah's cousin. Cruel Horatio Thomas, to suspect your poor Matilda! (*taking out handkerchief, and sobbing.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) Now she's going to blubber. (*taking handkerchief from her, and wiping his eyes.*) But I don't suspect you. (*aside.*) One of Aunt Charlotte's best cambric handkerchiefs. (*seeing MATILDA, who has seated herself in the arm-chair before the fire.*) Now she's making herself comfortable in Aunt Charlotte's arm-chair. (*looks at watch.*) Seven o'clock, and I promised to be with Fanny at a quarter past seven — if I could only manage to slip out. (*putting on his hat, and making for door, L.*)

Matil. Horatio Thomas!

Spark. Eh? (*stopping, and taking off his hat, which he holds behind him.*)

Matil. Put some coals on the fire, there's a dear — you'll find the scuttle outside the door. (*falling back in the arm-chair, and turning over the leaves of a book.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) Was it to hand about coal-scuttles that I put on straw-colored kids and a white choker — this is the result of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. Oh, if I could only get back my portrait and that lock of my hair — wouldn't I — (*makes a face at her, goes out at C. D., then returns with large coal-scuttle full of coals, which he dashes down near the fireplace, then takes a shovel, and puts some on.*)

Matil. Another shovelful, dear!

Spark. Oh, bother! (*takes up scuttle, and empties it on fire, then dashes it down again — aside.*) Nice sort of work this for a gentleman in straw-colored kids and a white choker. (*looking at watch.*) Quarter past seven — I must be off. (*puts on his hat, and is making for the door.*)

Matil. Where are you going?

Spark. Why, I just remember, I've important business at the Mansion House with the First Lord of the Admiralty — I mean the Turkish Ambassador.

Matil. Nonsense — he can wait — give me that footstool, there's a dear.

Spark. (*dignified.*) Really, Miss Jones —

Matil. Now look sharp — you're so precious slow.

Spark. (*taking up footstool — aside.*) As I said before, this comes of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. (*aloud, and putting footstool down before her.*) There's your stool!

Matil. Thank'ee, dear. (*extending herself in the arm-chair.*) This is what I call comfortable. Horatio Thomas, come and sit by me, there's a dear — you shall have the footstool — there!

Spark. I thank you, but having, as I said before, important business at the West India Docks with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. (*putting on his hat, and going.*)

Matil. (*impatently.*) Do as I tell you, and come and sit by me.

Spark. (banging hat down on table.) I'm coming! *(aside.)* A pretty contemptible figure I must cut with my straw-colored kids and white cravat; but, as I said before, this comes of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. *(sits on footstool, and looking at his watch.)* Half past seven. Oh, if I only knew where she keeps that portrait, and that infernal lock of hair.

Matil. Horatio Thomas, dear.

Spark. Well! *(sulkily.)*

Matil. Ain't it prime to sit together, and warm our toes by the fire, eh?

Spark. Yes, remarkably prime. *(aside.)* I don't know that I ever endured greater muscular agony in all my life. *(sitting on footstool, with his knees up to his chin.)*

Matil. Now I tell you what, you shall sing me a song — something tender and sentimental:

Spark. (getting up.) You really must excuse me; but having, as I said before, important business at the National Gallery with the Archbishop of Canterbury —

Matil. Do you hear what I say? Sing me a song, directly.

Spark. (going towards piano — aside.) As I've observed once or twice already, this comes of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. Where the devil she can have put that portrait and that lock of hair, I can't imagine. *(sitting down — aloud.)* I'll give you the last new ballad. *(striking up, ad libitum.)* "We won't go home till morning," &c.

Matil. (starting, and stopping her ears.) That will do — I have had enough of that.

Spark. Oh, you've had enough, have you? but I haven't, so here goes again. "For she's a very good fellow," &c. *(banging on the piano, and singing at the top of his voice.)*

Matil. Come away, do! *(pulling him away from piano.)* Horatio Thomas, dear, I want you to teach me the last new dance — what do you call it? "Pop goes the Measles"?

Spark. The measles! the weasel! *(aside.)* People would hardly credit the humiliating results of familiarizing oneself with one's servant. Here am I — Horatio Thomas Sparkins — five hundred pounds a year — no profession, — turning dancing master, and teaching a servant "Pop goes the Weasel." *(aloud.)* Come along! *(Dance.) (after dance.)* Wheugh! I haven't a bit of breath left in my body — this is another of the agreeable results of familiarizing oneself with one's servant.

Matil. By-the-by, where was you got to last night?

Spark. Where I was got to! — I was at the opera.

Matil. The Hopora! And what did you see?

Spark. Oh — I saw Sardanapalus — no — I saw the Dona del Lago.

Matil. Did you! Sit down, and tell me all about it.

Spark. All about it — it'd puzzle me to tell her *anything* about it. *(looking at watch.)* I really can't keep the Chairman of the Middlesex Sessions waiting any longer.

Matil. Nonsense! Now begin!

Spark. Well, then, after the overture, the curtain rises, and discovers a mountainous country in the — Bay of Biscay, with Mount Vesuvius in the distance. Well, a flourish of trumpets is heard, and

Spark. Quite delighted — flattered, I'm sure. (*looking anxiously towards L. C.*) Suppose we adjourn to the drawing-room!

Re-enter MAJOR, C. from R.

Major. With all my heart; and we'll get up a dance, and a chorus, till Pivot the lawyer comes, with the marriage settlements in his pocket — eh, you young rogue? (*poking HORATIO.*) Come along.

[*Exit with FANNY — MRS. PUDDIFOOT and guests, C. to R.*]

Spark. Pivot with the marriage settlements — Matilda with the curtains — and Fanny here. I've half a mind to rush to the nearest railway station, jump into the first train that starts, and go straight ahead somewhere or other. Here she comes.

Enter MATILDA, with white curtains, R.

Matil. Hollo! you've not taken down the red 'uns. (*pointing.*)

Spark. No! (*aside.*) I must get her out of the way somehow or other. (*suddenly.*) Matilda, listen — Aunt Charlotte is out of the way — we've got the evening before us, so let's go out and enjoy ourselves. How do you like the idea, eh?

Matil. Oh, first-rate — where shall we go?

Spark. Cremorne or Exeter Hall!

Matil. I vote for Cremorne. You're a dear, good, kind duck of a dear! so come along. (*taking his arm.*)

Spark. What, together? no, no, consider your reputation. No, no, we'll meet somewhere or other in half an hour! let's see — suppose we say Temple Bar or Battersea Bridge!

Matil. I will be at Temple Bar!

Spark. And if by chance you should get there before me, (*aside.*) which you probably will —

Matil. I'll wait till you come.

Spark. Do, there's a dear! (*aside.*) She'll wait till I come! that's satisfactory!

Matil. Good by! I'll run and put on my bonnet, and slip out up the area steps. Recollect Temple Bar, and I will wait for you —

Spark. Till I come. Be sure you wait till I come.

Matil. Of course; and then for Cremorne.

[*Exit, L. U. R.*]

Spark. Tol de rol — tol de rol! Ha, ha, ha! I've managed that little affair to my entire satisfaction, and now for my darling Fanny; but let me see that I'm all correct first. (*arranging his cravat before glass, and standing on arm-chair, dancing all the time.*) La, la, la, la!

Enter MAJOR VOLLEY, C. from R.

Major. Halloa! what the deuce is he at now? he's dancing the polka on an arm-chair. (*aloud.*) Zounds! what are you doing up there?

Spark. Up here! so I am, I declare. If you were as happy as I am, you'd be glad to get up anywhere. (*jumps.*) Toothache all gone!

Major. Well, I congratulate you on having got rid of a nuisance.

Spark. Yes, my nuisance left me about two minutes and a half ago (*aside.*) for Temple Bar. (*aloud.*) So now for my adorable Fanny.

Major. By-the-by, Horatio, Fanny thinks you rather a lukewarm sort of a lover.

Spark. Oh, does she?

Major. Yes, here she is!

Spark. Is she? (*aside.*) Then I'll astonish her!

Enter FANNY, C. from R.

Fanny. Papa, you're wanted to make up a rubber.

Major. Very well! (*aside to SPARKINS.*) Now here's a chance for you — d—n it, Horatio, go it a bit.

Spark. (*aside.*) She thinks me lukewarm, does she? then I will go it a bit — several bits. (*advancing behind FANNY, and kissing her.*)

Fanny. (*screaming.*) Ah! oh, Mr. Sparkins.

Spark. I'm afraid you find me timid — shy; but I can't help it — extreme diffidence is my failing! (*kisses her again.*)

Enter MATILDA, L. U. E., in bonnet and shawl — seeing him kiss FANNY, throws off her shawl, and sits near table.

Fanny. (*trying to get away.*) Really, Mr. Sparkins!

Spark. Call me not Sparkins — call me your Horatio Thomas, for I am your Horatio Thomas, and you will be your Horatio Thomas's Fanny! (*falling on his knees, and kissing her hands — aside.*) And to think of that unhappy Matilda Jones cooling her heels under Temple Bar all this while.

Fanny. Hark! papa is calling me.

[*Runs out C. to R.*

Spark. (*who has not seen FANNY's exit — seizing MATILDA, who has come down and taken FANNY's place.*) Never mind your papa, my adorable Fanny, but say, say when you will be — (*looking up and seeing her.*) the devil!

Matil. (*with assumed quietness.*) So, sir, you send me to cool my heels under Temple Bar, do you? Very well, then look out for squalls, that's all. (*going after FANNY.*)

Spark. (*stopping her.*) Where are you going?

Matil. To revenge myself by showing your portrait to your adorable Fanny.

Spark. (*throwing himself before her.*) Matilda Jones, beware! if you cross the threshold of that door, it shall be over your own body — I'm desperate — mad — frantic — whoorah! (*advancing towards her, and flourishing his arms.*)

Matil. (*screaming.*) Ah! help! murder! police! (*falls into his arms.*)

Spark. Zounds! she's fainted! 'Tilda — 'Tilda! don't be a fool! I'd slap her hands, only I can't. Will any one come and slap this woman's hands?

Mrs. P. (*without, R.*) Horatio Thomas, where are you?

Spark. Zounds! Aunt Charlotte's voice. (*seizing up MATILDA, and running about with her.*) Where shall I take her to? what shall I do with her? (*shouting.*) Will any one tell me what to do with her? I'd put her in the cistern, only we haven't got one.

Mrs. P. Horatio Thomas, I say.

Spark. Oh, lud! (*rushing off with MATILDA, and runs up against PIVOT, who enters, c. from R.*)

Pivot. Halloa! what do I see?

Spark. (*to PIVOT.*) Silence! not a word, or I'll strangle you. (*rushing off into his room, R., with MATILDA.*)

Pivot. (*astonished.*) "Strangle!" he distinctly said "strangle."

Enter MRS. PUDDIFOOT, c. from R.

Mrs. P. Matilda! Matilda, I say — (*seeing PIVOT.*) Ah! Mr. Pivot.

Pivot. (*suddenly.*) No, ma'am, I haven't seen anything — I haven't seen anything — I haven't heard anything — I don't know anything — 'pon my honor, ma'am. Good evening, ma'am! (*aside.*) "Strangle!" he distinctly said "strangle!" (*makes his escape at door, c. to R.*)

Mrs. P. Why, what's the matter with the man?

Enter MAJOR VOLLEY, c. from R.

Major. Where the deuce is he? Do you know your nephew is a very extraordinary young man? There's no keeping him in one place for two minutes together.

Mrs. P. I thought he was in the drawing-room.

Major. Deuce a bit! we shall find him perched up on some article of furniture or other, I'll be bound.

Re-enter SPARKINS, from R. D.

Spark. (*very pale, and carrying a large brown pitcher.*) Such a terrific scene! She no sooner came to herself than she threatened to drown herself in the wash-hand basin, upon which I laid violent hands on the pitcher of water, and here it is! (*seeing MAJOR.*) Zounds! the Major. (*hiding the pitcher behind him.*)

Major. So I've found you at last, eh?

Mrs. P. Yes, and you must come to the drawing-room, and sing your favorite song, the "Ship on Fire."

Spark. (*aside.*) Sing the "Ship on Fire" with a pitcher of water in my hand?

Mrs. P. By-the-by, we can't make up a game of speculation for the want of counters. I think they must be in your room. (*going towards door, R.*)

Spark. (*rushing and placing himself before door.*) No, no, no! you'll find them in that table drawer — there! (*Mrs. P. goes to table.*)

Enter FANNY, c. from R.

Fanny. Now, Mr. Sparkins, are you going to sing, or not?

Spark. Yes — certainly — most happy — but — (*aside to MAJOR VOLLEY, in a mysterious whisper.*) There! (*putting the pitcher in his hand.*) Hush! not a word! You understand! (*runs out with FANNY, c. to R.*)

Major. Halloa! a pitcher! (*upsetting water over his legs.*) Zounds! here, stop! (*shouting after him.*)

Mrs. P. Heyday! what's the matter? why, Major, what have you got there?

Major. Here! who, I — that is — (*bewildered.*)

Mrs. P. The man's had too much negus, and yet I'm sure it was weak enough! (*aloud.*) You may well have recourse to a pitcher of water, sir — drink it, sir — every drop, sir — it will do you good, sir. Ugh!

Major. The woman's mad! but why the deuce did my son-in-law deposit this ponderous pitcher in my hands?

Enter PIVOT, C. from R.

Pivot. Major, you'll make one at a rubber at sixpenny shorts.

Major. Certainly, but — (*aside to him, and in a mysterious whisper.*) There! (*putting the pitcher into his hands.*) Hush! not a word — you understand!

Pivot. What's this? a pitcher! Major! Major! what the deuce shall I do with it. (*looking about at back for a place to deposit the pitcher.*)

Re-enter SPARKINS, C. from R.

Spark. (*speaking off as he enters.*) There are thirteen more verses, but I can't remember them. (*to AUDIENCE.*) No wonder — I can think of nothing but that unhappy creature I left stretched in a state of insensibility on the hearth-rug.

Pivot. (*at R. D.*) Suppose I put the pitcher in here! what do I see? a woman!

Spark. (*running to him, and swinging him round, upsetting the contents of the pitcher over him.*) Hush! not a word, or I'll strangle you! (*runs into room, R., slamming door after him.*)

Pivot. (*after a short pause.*) Well, during the thirty years I've practised as an attorney, I'll venture to assert, affirm, and declare that — Zounds! here he is again! (*seeing SPARKINS at R., runs off with pitcher, C. to R.*)

Enter SPARKINS, R.

Spark. It's all right. I've not only persuaded Matilda that my marriage with Fanny is broken off, but I've actually prevailed on her to retire to her attic for the night — but she insists on having her bed warmed first — and no wonder, for I threw such a quantity of water on her face to bring her to, that I've given her a dreadful cold in the head. Let me see, where the deuce is the warming-pan? I think it's in Aunt Charlotte's room. (*goes into room, L. 1 R., and brings in warming-pan — goes to fireplace, and scrapes some coals into the warming-pan.*) That'll do!

Fanny. (*without.*) Mr. Sparkins!

Spark. Zounds! here's Fanny. (*hiding the warming-pan behind him, the handle thrust up his coat, and the pan hanging down between his coat tails —*

Enter FANNY, C. from R.

Fanny. Well, Mr. Sparkins, you seem to forget that you invited me for the first polka. (*music of polka heard.*)

Spark. The first? no, the second! (*suddenly.*) Ah!

Fanny. What's the matter?

Spark. Nothing! (*aside.*) The warming-pan's red hot, I'm sure it is.

Enter MAJOR, c. from R.

Major. Well, Fanny, so you've found your partner, I see!

Spark. (*running to her, still concealing the warming-pan behind him.*) Yes, here we are, (*putting his arms round her waist.*) practising the polka. (*dancing with her, the pan dangling behind him — in passing the MAJOR, he stops, grasps his arm.*) There! (*giving him the warming-pan.*) Hush! not a word — you understand! (*takes FANNY's waist, and exit dancing, c. to R.*)

Major. A warming-pan! damn it! that's worse than the pitcher; what does it all mean? will anybody tell me what it all means? (*runs off after SPARKINS, calling after him — runs up against*

MRS. PUDDIFOOT, enters c. from R.

Mrs. P. Ah! (*screaming.*)

Major. A thousand pardons — but hush! not a word! you understand! there! (*puts the pan in her hands, and rushes off c. to R.*)

Mrs. P. (*shouting.*) Major — Major! (*running about.*)

Enter PIVOT, c. from R.

Pivot. What's the matter, my dear madam?

Mrs. P. Matter! run after the major! no! hush! not a word — you understand! there! (*puts the pan into his hands, and runs after MAJOR, c. to R.*)

Pivot. No, d—n it! I can't stand this! first a pitcher, then a warming-pan. (*runs about.*)

Enter MATILDA, R. D.

Matil. What can keep Horatio Thomas so long? why does he not come with the warming-pan? (*seeing PIVOT.*) Oh, thank'ee, my good man — I will give you sixpence next time. (*about to take the warming-pan.*)

Pivot. (*indignant.*) Good man! do you know who I am, young woman? I'm Jeremiah John Pivot, attorney-at-law, come to draw up the marriage settlements.

Matil. Marriage settlements!

Pivot. Yes, between Horatio Thomas Sparkins, bachelor, and Fanny Volley, spinster.

Matil. Ah! (*faints on his shoulder — then suddenly starts upright again, grasps him by the arm, and drags him forward.*) Listen to me, old 'un — I don't wish to hurt you, but if you don't prevent this marriage, I'll kill you.

Pivot. Help! murder! (*rushes out, c. to R., dragging the warming-pan after him.*)

Matil. So, then, the marriage is not broken off! Oh, Horatio Thomas, haven't I just got a rod in pickle for you?

Enter MRS. PUDDIFOOT, C. from R.

Mrs. P. Oh, here you are, Matilda — come here! here are the bracelets. (*giving case.*) When I ring the bell, you'll bring them in, and present them to Miss Fanny Volley with Horatio Thomas's compliments! It'll be an agreeable surprise for her!

Matil. Yes, ma'am!

Mrs. P. Remember, you are not to come in till I ring the bell.

Matil. Very well, ma'am. (*aside.*) Now to fetch the good-for-nothing wretch's portrait and the lock of his odious hair — perhaps when I present them to the dear creature, her surprise will not be so very agreeable. [Exit, C. to R.]

Enter SPARKINS, C. from R.

Spark. Fanny dances like an angel! I could have kept it up for an hour, only I suddenly recollected that that poor creature with a cold in her head was waiting all this time for the warming-pan. (*looking about stage.*) Where the deuce can the old Major have put it?

MAJOR appears at door, R. C., with the warming-pan in his hand.

Major. Can what Pivot tells me be true? "Major Volley," said he, putting the warming-pan into my hands — I don't see why he should, but he did. "Major Volley," said he, "it's my painful duty to inform you that I saw a youthful female come out of your intended son-in-law's room."

Spark. Ah! (*seeing MAJOR, goes to him, and lays hold of the end of warming-pan.*) Thank ye, Major — sorry you should have had it in your hands so long, but —

Major. (*gravely.*) Stand aside, sir. (*turning towards R. D.*)

Spark. (*suddenly.*) Where are you going?

Major. (*significantly.*) To your room, sir.

Spark. Pooh! no, you can't — you shan't.

Major. Shan't! (*they struggle — the handle comes out, and the MAJOR rushes into rooms, R. 3 E.*)

Spark. It's all over! he'll find Matilda. I shall lose Fanny — zounds! (*tossing the hot warming-pan from hand to hand, and at last throws it into fireplace.*)

Enter MATILDA, L.

Matilda! then you're not there! of course not — as you're here, you can't be there. (*anxiously looking towards R. D.*) Why didn't you retire to your attic? Let me entreat my poor suffering Matilda instantly to retire to her attic.

Matil. (*in a freezing tone.*) Not till the suffering Matilda has obeyed her missuses' orders, and presented something she's got in her pocket to Miss Fanny Volley with Mr. Horatio Thomas's compliments.

Spark. (*aside.*) She means the bracelets.

Matil. (*taking out a miniature from her right hand pocket, and holding it up to HORATIO.*) Here it is!

Spark. (aside.) My portrait! my lock of hair? *(suddenly.)* Matilda, give me that portrait — that lock of hair — and I'll return you your letters. *(producing letters — MATILDA shakes her head.)* I'll buy you ever so many shawls, and no end of bonnets — not one of which shall go on your head! There!

Matil. Catch a weasel — *(shaking her head.)*

Spark. Lots of dresses, loads of stockings, bushels of boots and shoes!

Matil. No, I want nothing but revenge! — that I'll have. I'll wait till I hear the drawing-room bell, and then I'll rather astonish your weak mind.

[Exit, L., closing door.]

Spark. But Matilda! Matilda, I say!

Enter MAJOR, from door R., with MATILDA'S bonnet, which he holds behind his back — sees HORATIO — crosses to him, and leads him to C. of stage.

Major. Horatio Thomas Sparkins! as Fanny's only father — I mean — only parent, I desire that you will at once, and without prevarication, explain, solve, clear up, and elucidate this article of female attire which I've just discovered in your room. *(holding up bonnet.)*

Spark. Well, I confess — I confess I am rather inclined to come to the conclusion that — it's a bonnet.

Major. It is a bonnet, sir — but whose bonnet, sir?

Spark. (quietly.) Aunt Charlotte's.

Major. No such thing! I saw it on the head of her lady's maid the day before yesterday.

Spark. Very likely — the fact is that — I think somebody called me. *(going up.)*

Major. (pulling him back.) No, no, I insist on your explaining this bonnet, sir — this bonnet, sir, sticks in my throat!

Spark. (aside.) I wish it did, with all my heart! *(aloud.)* You must know that the owner of that bonnet has got an unfortunate habit of — of walking in her sleep.

Major. A somnambulist! *(suddenly.)* By Jove! here's a splendid opportunity of convincing them of the truth of the sublime science of mesmerism. *(running to bell rope.)*

Spark. What are you going to do?

Major. Ring for her of course — I suppose she'd come.

Spark. (pulling him away.) I'm horribly afraid she would — with my portrait in one hand and my lock of hair in another! What's to be done? I have it. *(aloud to MAJOR.)* She's there — in that room — put her to sleep through the keyhole, *(imitating mesmeric passes.)* and then tell her to bring you some article or other — no matter what?

Major. I write! what article?

Spark. For instance, my portrait, and lock of my hair which I intended for Fanny! they're locked up in Aunt Charlotte's work-box, and the key's in the china teacup on the mantelpiece! now begin. *(MAJOR turns up his cuffs, and begins making violent passes from himself towards the door, increasing in energy.)* Go it — keep it up!

Major. Wheugh! it's very easy to say "go it" — "keep it up" — she must be in the mesmeric sleep by this time — so now to draw her into the room! *(begins again making violent passes.)*

Spark. Capital — I think she's coming. (*lays hold of bell-rope, and pulls the bell.*)

Major. Halloa! somebody rang.

Spark. The people next door! go it!

Enter MRS. PUDDIFOOT, FANNY, PIVOT, ladies and gentlemen, &c., c. from R.

Spark. (*seeing them.*) Confound it, and I've just rung the bell.

Mrs. P. (*observing MAJOR's actions.*) Mercy on me! what's the matter with the Major.

Spark. (*aside to them.*) Hush! slightly deranged. (*touching his forehead.*)

Mrs. P. (*aside.*) He's been at the negus again! — now then to ring for Matilda. (*rings bell, and MATILDA enters slowly, L., and looks steadfast at HORATIO. MAJOR turns to company, and seems to explain to them his mesmeric experiment.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) Matilda! (*in an imploring tone.*) 'Tilda!

Matil. Silence! I come here for revenge.

Spark. (*aside.*) She's got that infernal portrait, and that damned lock of hair in her pocket — it's all over with me. (*sinking into a chair.*)

Major. (*to the company.*) Now you shall see! ahem! — (*turning to MATILDA, and making mesmeric motions.*) Now, young woman, I charge you answer me! (*turning to company.*) Of course you are aware that she's in a deep mesmeric trance all this while. (*to MATILDA.*) What have you come here for?

Matil. (*emphatically.*) To expose a faithless monster in all his naked deformity! (*the company express astonishment.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) That's me! I wish I was fifteen thousand miles off!

Matil. I've got him in my pocket — I mean his portrait! (*looking fiercely at him, and at FANNY.*)

Spark. (*aside.*) Oh, for a trap-door! I wouldn't even mind an earthquake — anything to swallow me up!

Major. Halloa! halloa! what's that about a portrait? (*to HORATIO — suddenly and furiously.*) So, sir! I see it all — you are the faithless monster! (*to MATILDA.*) The portrait, quick! where is it?

Matil. There! (*hands miniature to MAJOR.*)

Spark. It's all over! (*falls back.*)

Major. Now then! (*all surround him.*) Now, then, to know who this faithless monster is. Heyday! what's this — who's this? A Lifeguardsman!

All. A Lifeguardsman! Tol de rol! tol de rol! (*dancing.*)

Matil. Oh, gemini! I've gone and put my hand into the wrong pocket!

Spark. (*to company.*) And shall we allow — I repeat, shall we permit an innocent, a confiding female from the rural districts to be trifled with by a heartless, an inhuman Lifeguardsman? Never! (*to company.*) Oblige me by saying — "Never!"

All. Never!

Spark. (*to MATILDA.*) Your wedding portion shall be our care! (*aside to her.*) Here's my share — *your letters* — (*taking a bundle of*

papers out of his pocket.) which I should only have to show to your Lifeguardsman — but which I will generously exchange for my portrait and the lock of my hair.

Matil. There! (*giving them to him.*)

Spark. There! (*giving papers to her.*)

Matil. What do I see? A bundle of five pound notes! Then you're a trump, after all!

Spark. The devil! I've put my hand in the wrong pocket! Never mind — I've learnt a lesson that's well worth the money, and that is, not to familiarize oneself with one's servants! And now *polka generale*! Gentlemen, take your partners. Fanny — your hand. (*all take partners, except MAJOR.*)

Major. Halloo! halloo! what shall I do for a partner?

Spark. I'll find you one. (*taking MATILDA'S hand, and addressing audience as he leads her to front.*) Ladies and Gentlemen, I am going to introduce Matilda Jones to my worthy father-in-law; but, as he's rather particular who he dances with, may I refer her to *you*, in the hope that you will overlook her faults —

Matil. And speak a kind word in favor of AUNT CHARLOTTE'S MAID.

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CURTAIN.

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Nature and Philosophy	Farce, " " " " " " " "	3	2
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Shocking Events	" " " " " " " "	3	2
Sent to the Tower	" " " " " " " "	3	0
Seeing Warren	" " " " " " " "	3	2
Somebody Else	" " " " " " " "	3	2
The Young Scamp	One Act	5	3
The Scholar	Comedy, Two Acts	5	2
The Lady of the Lions	Burlesque, One Act	5	4
Teddy Roe	Farce, " " " " " " " "	4	2
That Nose	" " " " " " " "	6	2
Trying It On	" " " " " " " "	3	3
The Wandering Minstrel	" " " " " " " "	4	3
The Bengal Tiger	" " " " " " " "	4	2
The Rough Diamond	" " " " " " " "	6	3
The Eton Boy	" " " " " " " "	3	2
The Turned Head	" " " " " " " "	6	1
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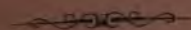
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Cool as a Cucumber	" "	3	2
Done on Both Sides	" "	3	2
Dunducketty's Picnic	" "	4	3
Don't Forget your Opera Glasses	" "	3	2
I've written to Browne	" "	4	2
Ici on Parle Francais	Farce, One Act	3	4
Jenny Lind	" "	4	1
Love in Livery	" "	4	4
Little Toddlekins	" "	3	3
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Nature and Philosophy	Farce, " "	3	2
Smashington Goit	" "	5	3
Shocking Events	" "	3	2
Sent to the Tower	" "	3	0
Seeing Warren	" "	3	2
Somebody Else	" "	3	2
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Trying It On	" "	3	3
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The Bengal Tiger	" "	4	2
The Rough Diamond	" "	6	3
The Eton Boy	" "	3	2
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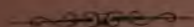
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"BROTHER BILL AND ME."

AN ORIGINAL FARCE.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

WILLIAM E. SUTER, Esq.



BOSTON:
CHARLES H. SPENCER,
203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1870, Feb. 4.
Gift of
Hon. F. Spencer,
Boston.
BROTHER BILL AND ME.

CHARACTERS.

MR. ARCHIBALD NOODLE (<i>First Old Man</i>)	<i>London, 1868.</i> Mr. Fitzroy.	<i>Boston Museum, 1865.</i> Mr. R. F. McClannin.
MR. SIMON SQUIB (<i>Second Low Comedy</i>)	Mr. Roberts.	Mr. Woolf.
WILLIAM WIGGLES (<i>Light Comedy, or Eccentric</i>) . .	Mr. Billington.	Mr. J. Wilson.
BENJAMIN WIGGLES (<i>First Low Comedy</i>)	Mr. J. L. Toole.	Mr. Wm. Warren.
POLICEMEN		
MISS SERAPHINA NOODLE (<i>Old Woman</i>)	Mrs. Garthwaite.	Miss Emily Mestayer.
WILHELMINA NOODLE (<i>Walking Lady</i>)	Miss Allenson.	Mrs. T. M. Hunter.
MARTHA WIGGLES (<i>First Soubrette</i>)	Miss Eliza Webb.	Mrs. R. F. McClannin.

COSTUMES. — MODERN.

BROTHER BILL AND ME.

SCENE. — *Comfortable Apartment, neatly furnished. Door, c.; doors, R. and L.; tables, chairs, and sofa, L. C.; breakfast table, R. C., at which are seated SERAPHINA, C., WILHELMINA, L. C., MR. NOODLE, L. of table, SIMON SQUIB, R. of table.*

Wilhel. Nothing more, thank you, aunt; I have made an excellent breakfast.

Seraph. And you, Mr. Squib, have eaten nothing.

Simon. And that is much more than I have lately taken, I assure you. Heigho!

Seraph. Brother, any more coffee?

Mr. N. No, thank you, Serry — I have had my usual five cups, (*rising*) and I never go beyond; for even coffee should be taken in moderation.

Simon. (*aside, rising.*) Oh, Lord! he calls half a gallon of coffee a moderate dose!

Seraph. (*calling.*) Martha! (*all come forward.*)

Enter MARTHA, L. door, and takes away breakfast things, L. door.

Seraph. (R.) I am sorry, Mr. Squib, to see you always so melancholy.

Simon. (R. C.) I am sickening for the mumps, I know I am. Mr. Noodle, you have used me shamefully.

Mr. N. (L. C.) Bless me! what do you mean?

Simon. Don't you call yourself my father's friend?

Mr. N. Certainly — our friendship dates from boyhood.

Simon. Didn't you write to him that you had a fascinating niece?

Mr. N. Well, was not that true?

Simon. Yes, but —

Mr. N. And he replied, that he had a most delightful son.

Simon. Yes, I know — and that was true, too: but didn't you also say that you were certain a mutual affection would arise between the two juveniles, if once they met?

Mr. N. And that is true, too.

Simon. No, it isn't; for I came to London, prepared to fall in love, and I did — for I found your niece a striking girl, but not at all struck with me; and you ought to be ashamed of yourself for bringing me to town under false pretences.

Wilhel. (L.) Pray, Mr. Squib, do not be angry with my uncle. I would love you if I could, but really —

Mr. N. (L. c.) She can't — that is, she — she — in short, she can't: but you'll try, won't you, Willy? just to please your old nunkey — who would so like to see the daughter of his poor brother wedded to the son of his old friend.

Wilhel. (L.) Well, Mr. Squib and myself may be friends, too; but for the rest —

Simon. (R.) Friendship! — pooh! — I want love, and a good deal of it, and a woman's friendship is no use — it's as insipid as a loin of veal without any stuffing.

Wilhel. (*laughing.*) Delightful comparison!

Simon. I've got a rival somewhere — I am sure of it; and what's worse, he must be a very handsome and a remarkably agreeable fellow, or else before this I should certainly have cut him out. But, (*crosses*, L. c.) Miss Wilhelmina, don't let him cross my path; for since I can't cut him out of your heart, hang me if I don't cut him out of the world!

Wilhel. (L.) Sir, you are becoming impertinent! (*goes up.*)

Mr. N. (L. c.) Don't be rude, Simon: though I believe you are right, and that Willy has a predilection for somebody, though she won't own it —

Simon. (L.) You ought to have discovered that before you sent for me. Curse me, if it isn't one of the worst cases of swindling I ever met with.

Mr. N. Come, come, don't be angry; you know well that I am most anxious to see you one of my family. My niece will not have you; so what say you to my sister here?

Simon. (*starting.*) What!

Mr. N. She's an amiable creature.

Seraph. (R. c. *simpering.*) Oh! brother, how can you talk so!

Mr. N. How she has been suffered to remain so long single is a mystery to me.

Simon. (*aside.*) It doesn't astonish me a bit.

Mr. N. She is even now, I know, most anxious to be married.

Simon. That isn't at all unlikely.

Seraph. (*simpering.*) Oh! brother, how can you say so! — you know that if inclined —

Mr. N. To be sure she is no longer young.

Seraph. (*indignantly.*) Brother!

Simon. Young! no, I should think not: she is as old as my grandmother, and not half so good looking. (*SERAPHINA flounces about in a rage.*)

Mr. N. Simon, Simon, I am ashamed of you! and I insist that you instantly apologize, or — or — in short — apologize.

Simon. Well, I — (*crosses to c.*) I didn't mean to hurt her feelings.

Mr. N. (L.) There, there, Serry — you hear.

Simon. (c.) And I hope you will excuse me, ma'am, for calling you old.

Mr. N. (*with great satisfaction.*) There, there.

Simon. For we can't help our years, and, after all, I dare say you are not so old as you look. (*SERAPHINA shrieks and sinks into chair.*
R. c. — *WILHELMINA, R., endeavors to console her.*)

Mr. N. Oh! worse than ever! — worse than ever! Hold your tongue, sir! — hold your tongue! (*SIMON goes up.*)

Enter MARTHA, L. door.

Oh, Martha, I have something to say to you — to you and to the new man-servant. Call him.

Martha. What, Benjamin?

Mr. N. (c.) No, no, John; you know I arranged to call him John, for to have a servant named Benjamin is not convenient; it — it — in short, it's not convenient.

Martha. (L. c.) No, nor it ain't convenient to *him* to do any work, and he won't — does nothing but talk about his brother Bill.

Mr. N. Bill! a low term! — it — it — in short, it's vulgar. His references were good; we must give him a fair trial, and I dare say he will improve. Call him.

Martha. (*calling as she goes.*) John! — d'y'e hear — John!

[*Exit, L. door.*]

Ben. (*without.*) There ain't no such individual in the place.

Mr. N. Come here, sir.

Enter BENJAMIN, L. door.

Ben. Ah, you may call me *sir*; that's more respectful.

Mr. N. (c.) Once more, sir, let me tell you that your name is John.

Ben. (L. c.) No, it ain't — it's Benjamin.

Mr. N. I insist that while in this house you answer to the name of John.

Ben. I'll try, but 'twill be very difficult. I once changed my dog's name from Pincher to Towser, 'cause 'twas prettier, but it was full three months afore he'd wag his tail at it.

Mr. N. Now, be sure you remember that John —

Ben. Means Benjamin: but why not call me Ben? that would be short, and agreeable, and friendly, and familiar-like between us.

Mr. N. No, John. I am determined to — to — in short, John —

Ben. Short John — very well. 'Tisn't every chap that gets his master to stand godfather to him.

Mr. N. And you must not object if I tell you in advance —

Ben. Oh, no — I shan't object to anything in advance, if it's only a quarter's wages.

Mr. N. Booby!

Wilhel. (R., *aside, her eyes fixed on BENJAMIN.*) The likeness is amazing!

Mr. N. Martha tells me you will do no work.

Ben. Certainly not; I haven't been used to it.

Mr. N. Then why did you come here?

Ben. To try if the work would suit me.

Mr. N. But you haven't tried the work.

Ben. No, but I've looked at it, and I see it wouldn't agree with me.

Mr. N. Then, pray, sir, what induced you to apply here?

Ben. I'll tell you; you see, brother Bill and me —

Mr. N. No, no; never mind that — you shall have a week's fair trial, and if then — but, I had forgotten — I have an important letter to write. I'll speak to you and Martha presently. I shan't be long, I — I — in short, I shan't be long. [Exit, R. door.]

Simon. (has come forward, L. — to BENJAMIN.) Ha, ha, ha! It strikes me that you are a regular nondescript.

Ben. Does it; and you looks to me as if you was a little in that line yourself.

Wilhel. (R., aside, her eyes still fixed on BENJAMIN.) 'Tis perfectly bewildering.

Ben. (L. c., aside, catching WILHELMINA's eye.) How that young lady is a devouring of my phizygognomy; she's discovered, perhaps, that I've seen better days, and admires me accordingly. It seems to me as if I'd seen her somewhere afore. There, she's staring again, and I don't like it — it's vulgar. [Exit, L. door.]

Simon. (aside, down L. corner.) How she fixed her eyes on that John Benjamin. It can't be possible that he's my rival! If he was — (threatening — goes up.)

Seraph. (c.) Wilhelmina, my love, how earnestly you fixed your gaze on that young man!

Wilhel. (R. c.) Yes; you have not forgotten that, six months since, I went to Mrs. Bounceabout's *soirée*?

Seraph. Certainly not; for you confided to me the secret that, on that evening, a gentleman danced himself into your good graces, and you have, I am certain, been thinking of him ever since; but, what then —

Wilhel. Why, my dear aunt —

Seraph. Ah, I see; that is the man, and he has assumed the character of a servant to —

Wilhel. Aunt, what can you be thanking of! The gentleman I danced with was tall and handsome, and this man —

Seraph. Exactly — does not at all answer the description. My dear, I beg your pardon.

Wilhel. But this John, or Benjamin, or whatever may be his name, is the perfect photograph of a person who was at that same party, and who appeared particularly intimate with —

Seraph. The gentleman you danced with, as aforesaid — then, depend upon it, this friend — if he it really be — is here to aid in some way some sort of plot, and that you will soon see the — the gentleman you danced with.

Wilhel. Oh! (pleased.) if I thought that — but, (crosses, c.) I will call him, and if possible, resolve my doubts as to this likeness. John! Mr. John!

Enter BENJAMIN, L. door.

Ben. You're very polite; but you mean Benjamin — yes, mum.

Wilhel. (c.) Service is new to you, I think?

Ben. (L. c., aside.) She's found it out. There's no concealing one's natural dignity.

Wilhel. You have moved in a different sphere?

Ben. Yes, and I've moved in a different coat, for I can't move at all in this. The servant that *purceeded* me must have been a little 'un.

Wilhel. At Mrs. Bounceabout's, six months since —

Ben. (aside.) Then that's where I seed her, when I was there with brother Bill.

Wilhel. There was a gentleman who danced in an extraordinary manner, and who, altogether, made himself very conspicuous.

Ben. (aside.) That was me; when I goes out I likes to be somebody.

Wilhel. That same gentleman spoiled my new moire antique dress; and, if I mistake not, you are he.

Ben. No, I ain't. *(aside.)* It won't do to own it now, or she'll stop that mores antique out of my wages. *(aloud.)* Me, mum! — no, mum, you've made a mistake, mum. I never would dance, and I never did go to no parties.

Wilhel. (aside to SERAPHINA.) He won't own it; but I feel almost certain that —

Seraph. (R. C., to WILHELMINA.) My dear, you were wrong to speak of the dress, because —

(they go up talking — SIMON comes forward, L.)

Ben. (C.) That's the worst of going into society — one is sure to be recognized.

Simon. (L., aside.) All that whispering is very suspicious — he is only a slavey *(fixing his eyes on BENJAMIN)*, and very ugly; but there's no accounting for a woman's taste.

Ben. (aside.) Now, that chap's eying me — perhaps *he's* a going to recognize me now!

Simon. (L. C.) Have you any reason to suppose that Miss Wilhelmina is in love with you?

Ben. (C.) It wouldn't surprise me; but it would be no use, for she's not my sort.

Simon. Did you ever see her until you came here?

Ben. (aside.) Now he's trying the pumping dodge. *(aloud.)* Certainly not — never! 'tisin't likely. *(aside.)* It's very mean to make so much fuss about a mores antique!

Simon. (aside.) No, no; it can't be this fellow. *(aloud.)* John, you are awfully ugly!

Ben. Well, now, that's very odd.

Simon. What?

Ben. Why, that's just what I was thinking about you — only I didn't like to say it. We're a pair of — “handsome is as handsome does” — chaps: if you wants to see beauty, you should look at my brother Bill — you see brother Bill and me! *(SIMON goes up.)*

Enter MR. NOODLE, R. door.

Mr. N. Now, then, John.

Ben. Benjamin — yes, sir.

Mr. N. (C.) Silence; — and Martha. Where is Martha?

Enter MARTHA, L. door.

Martha. Here, sir.

Mr. N. (C.) Good. Now, observe both of you: a gentleman named Fitz-Gullem will presently call — a good-looking, dashing in-

dividual; show him into this room, and treat him with the utmost deference.

Martha. (L. c.) Yes, sir — certainly, sir.

Ben. (L.) We'll be sure to treat him with indifference, sir.

Mr. N. Deference, booby! respect and —

Ben. Ah, that's what I've always been used to; 'cause, you see, brother Bill and me —

Martha. Go along, stupid!

Goes off, L. door, pushing BENJAMIN before her — SERAPHINA and WILHELMINA advance. R. — SIMON comes down, L.

Mr. N. Now, ladies, that you are fortified with a good breakfast, I will tell you that, which, if revealed to you while fasting, might, perhaps, have harrowed up your vitals.

Seraph. Oh! I am all agitation!

Mr. N. Last night, returning towards home about half past ten o'clock, and making my way down an obscure street to shorten my road, I suddenly came upon a spectacle which almost froze me with horror.

Wilhel. (R. c.) You terrify me, uncle! what was it?

Mr. N. Two little boys fighting — *extremely* little boys.

Seraph. It was, indeed, a horrid spectacle.

Simon. A pair of spectacles you mean, ma'am.

Mr. N. My natural feeling of humanity urged me on, and I broke through the crowd, and rushed to separate the juvenile combatants. I felt like a lion — was blind to all danger; when suddenly my hat was knocked over my eyes, my coat nearly torn from my back, and my watch snatched from my fob.

Wilhel. Oh, uncle!

Simon. Yes, miss, (*sighing.*) uncle has got it before this, no doubt.

Mr. N. At that moment a voice exclaimed, "Here comes a crusher!"

Seraph. } A crusher!

Wilhel. }

Simon. A what-er?

Mr. N. Crusher, I discovered, is the vulgar title for policeman.

Omnes. Oh!

Mr. N. I had just extended my jaws to vociferate murder, when another voice near me exclaimed, "Shut up, old fellow, here's your ticker — I have taken it from the rascal." A gentleman of imposing appearance thrust my watch into my hand and was hurrying away, but I followed and held him fast. I begged to know his name. "Fitz-Gullem," he said; I gave him my card — "A. Noodle, 95 Spooney Street," expressed my eternal obligations, and received from him a solemn promise that he would this morning call upon me.

Simon. And you really believe that he will come. (*aside.*) He's the softest old chap I ever did see.

Mr. N. But, his noble courage could not save my property, for, after shaking hands warmly with Mr. Fitz-Gullem, I walked quickly home, and on arriving, found I had no watch.

Simon. Ah, that is, you found it was lost.

Mr. N. Yes, no doubt I had been followed, and when I had no longer the protection of my generous friend, my watch was again stolen — never again to be restored to me.

Simon. The rascals *watched* for you, ha, ha, ha ! (*aside.*) It's quite clear to me that Mr. Fitz-Gullem is a thief. He won't come here, or, if he should, I'll go at once and give notice to the police.

[*Exit, C. D. to L.*
Mr. N. Ah, Willy, if you would only, to oblige me, fall in love with Mr. Fitz-Gullem — he is more worthy of you than Mr. Squib.

Wilhel. Uncle, really, you —

Mr. N. (crosses; R.) Well, well, come this way both of you, because I — that is I — I — in short — come this way.

[*Exit R. door, followed by the LADIES.*

Enter MARTHA, C. door from L., showing in WILLIAM WIGGLES.

Will. My dear, you overwhelm me with politeness; you are really too polite — (*aside.*) in fact, so d—d polite that I can't make out what she is up to.

Martha. (R. C.) I was ordered by my master to pay you every attention. (*curtsying.*) He said you would come this morning.

Will. Did he though? (*aside.*) And how the devil should he know that? (*looking about.*) Where's Ben, I wonder?

Martha. You need not tell me your name, for I at once recognized you from what master said — a tall, handsome man.

Will. Yes, certainly, that is exactly my description — (*aside.*) Ben has been giving it to his governor, I suppose.

Martha. So I'll run and let Mr. Noodle know that you are here.

Will. No, no, there's no occasion for that; he might be angry.

Martha. Angry! why, bless you, sir, he is dying to see you.

Will. Is he! (*aside.*) Ben must have been coming it strong, as usual, about me; (*aloud.*) but, in the first place, my dear, just tell —

Martha. Yes, sir, I'll tell him directly. (*runs off, R. door.*)

Will. Tell him — him is old Noodle, I suppose. What the deuce has Ben been up to? I wrote to say that I should call and see him to-day, and no doubt he has been telling his governor, as he does everybody, that his brother Bill is a most wonderful fellow; but even the truth, we know, should not at all times be spoken.

Enter MARTHA, R. door.

Martha. Here is master, sir.

[*Exit, L. door.*

MR. NOODLE rushes on, R. door, and embraces WILLIAM.

Mr. N. My dear sir — my brave preserver — welcome! a thousand times welcome!

Will. (L. C., aside.) Says I'm welcome. He makes himself very free, I think.

Mr. N. I should scarcely have known you again; you look so different to — to — in short, you look different.

Will. (aside.) Says I look different. What is he up to?

Mr. N. But to be sure it was night, and the great-coat you wore, and the wrapper which almost concealed your face — But never mind that; permit me again to thank you.

Will. (aside.) What for, I wonder? for wearing a great-coat and a wrapper, I suppose — not that I ever do wear a wrapper.

Mr. N. Would you believe it — when I returned home last night, my watch had gone, and no doubt forever.

Will. Was it, really? Well, it must be a capital watch that would go forever.

Mr. N. Ha, ha, ha! — good! — I — really — I — in short, it's — it's good! You saved me last night from robbery and maltreatment.

Will. The devil I did!

Mr. N. Of course. Surely you know I am the individual that — you cannot doubt my identity.

Will. Your identity? certainly not. *(aside.)* 'Tis my own that I am rather dubious about.

Mr. N. I gave you my card, and am, I assure you, A. Noodle.

Will. Oh, you're a noodle! — 'pon my soul, I believe you.

Mr. N. You may. A. short for Archibald — A. Noodle; a man who has the means and would be delighted to be of service to you; so speak, my dear Mr. Fitz-Gullem, and —

Will. What! — who!

Mr. N. Come, come; a true hero is, I know, always modest; but — are you a single man? My niece has a snug fortune; you shall marry her.

Will. Thank you, A. Noodle.

Mr. N. Yet, perhaps — And there's my sister; she is rich; if you like you shall marry her.

Will. (aside.) That's two! He's trying to lead me into a quiet case of bigamy.

Mr. N. Or, there's our domestic, Martha; a relation left her some property a while ago, and, if you choose, you shall marry her.

Will. (aside.) That's three! This old fellow must be one of the Mormons — mistakes me for somebody else; but I must explain, and —

Mr. N. Now, come along, and I'll introduce you to my sister and to my niece.

Will. Sir, you really must excuse me, but —

Mr. N. (taking hold of him.) No, I won't! Come along!

Will. But I want to tell you that I am —

Mr. N. I know you are — my brave and generous preserver! *(embracing him.)*

Will. (angrily.) Be quiet! you are a noodle.

Mr. N. A. Noodle — yes, I know I am. Come along. *(dragging him.)*

Will. A. Noodle, I tell you you are a noodle.

(MR. NOODLE drags WILLIAM off, R. door.)

Enter MARTHA and BENJAMIN, L. door.

Martha. Now, Mr. Ben — John — this won't do. Do you intend to keep on doing nothing?

Ben. Certainly, until I am tired of it, and then I shall go to bed.

Martha. (R. c.) Well, you have plenty of cool impudence!

Ben. (L. c.) Of course I have; I have been used to good society —

I am a gentleman what has seen better days. You see, brother Bill and me —

Martha. Hold your tongue; for if your brother Bill is at all like you —

Ben. But he isn't — everybody says he is a great deal better looking — not that I could ever see that myself; certainly his is a different style of beauty, and he is a different sort of fellow altogether to me.

Martha. I should hope so.

Ben. He was always sharp, I wasn't — stuck to his learning, I didn't; so he got rewarded and I got walloped; and when the holidays came, he used to go home loaded with prizes and marks of good conduct, and I used to return covered with marks of the birch.

Martha. Don't be indelicate.

Ben. How do you mean? I said *covered*, didn't I? I didn't mention any particular part, did I?

Martha. Oh, no more refinement than a cow or a whale!

Ben. A *wale*! bless you, I was all over wales. Then, you see, poor old mother died, and left us some property. Then Bill says to me, "Ben," says he, "we've been brought up to nothing; what shall we do now?" Then I says, "What we've been brought up to, of course." So we started, and Bill led me into genteel society. "Stick to me," says he, "and I'll make your fortune." So I never left him till he had spent all our money.

Martha. And now you have come to service?

Ben. Yes, me; but not brother Bill. He has got notions above that sort of thing, and is quite certain, somehow or other, to make his fortune yet; and if he does, I am all right, for he'll take good care of me.

Martha. In the mean time, how does he live?

Ben. First rate; he has made so many friends that he is able to choose his quarters.

Martha. But nobody invites you.

Ben. No, and that's what puzzles me; for wherever we went, people used to notice me a good deal more than they did Bill.

Martha. You make me quite curious to see this brother of yours.

Ben. Well, he'll be here to-day, and then you'll see a fine, handsome fellow; but you'd never guess we was brothers.

Martha. Certainly not, if he at all answers your description. He hasn't much sense though, or he would not have squandered all your money away. I shall never do so with mine.

Ben. Yours?

Martha. Yes; I have lately had a good bit of property left me.

Ben. Have you, really, Miss Martha Muggles? — hem, it's very odd I didn't observe it before, but you are an uncommon pretty girl.

Martha. I have been told so often.

Ben. (*aside.*) Ah, I am always a day after the fair. (*aloud.*) But, if you are a young lady of fortune, how is it you remain in service?

Martha. Because Mr. Noodle sheltered me when I was a poor, destitute girl, whom nobody would own, and has been a father to me ever since.

Ben. Um, ah, perhaps he has —

Martha. Has what?

Ben. Been a father to you. Perhaps he was from the very first.

Martha. What ! no, sir, my father was a —

Ben. Oh, if you know who he was, that settles it.

Martha. And I have promised Mr. Noodle never to leave him till I am married.

Ben. Not till you are married ! Ah, well, that's odd ; I promised him the same thing. 'Twould be droll if we should both leave together, wouldn't it ?

Martha. What do you mean ?

Ben. Why, you see, you are a unmarried spinster, and I am a single bachelore.

Martha. And so you may remain, for all I care.

Ben. Ah, you won't have me. Well, then, marry brother Bill, and that will be all the same ; because, you see, brother Bill and me —

Martha. Go along, you fool. *(pushes him off, L. door.)*

Enter WILLIAM, R. door.

Will. I can't stand it. I shall be kicked out when Noodle discovers I am not his champion, Fitz-Gullem. And yet, after all, I do not misrepresent myself ; 'tis he that misrepresents me, and will not give me a chance of explaining. He wanted to introduce me to his sister and his niece, and then I ran away, and now shall run out of the house, and look out for another opportunity to see Ben.

NOODLE runs on, R. door.

Mr. N. My dear Fitz-Gullem !

Will. (aside.) Oh, hang Fitz-Gullem !

Mr. N. Why did you leave me so abruptly ? My niece is, I assure you, a charming girl, though I am afraid her affections are beyond your reach. But my sister is delightfully affable, and —

Will. Your sister ! *(aside.)* Oh, Lord !

Mr. N. And entirely disengaged.

Will. I am sorry to hear it.

Mr. N. Sorry ! you mean glad — think what an opportunity for you. Seraphina is my junior — considerably.

Will. Ah, indeed.

Mr. N. Nearly three years.

Will. Oh !

Mr. N. And is, upon my honor, a charming creature.

Will. Is, you mean, *was*, about fifty years ago.

Mr. N. And has a fortune of ten thousand pounds.

Will. Oh, then I agree with you, A. Noodle, she is a charming creature.

Mr. N. (R. c.) So win her, my boy, and wear her.

Will. (L. c.) Wear her. *(aside.)* Well, one comfort, she must soon wear out.

Mr. N. She is hale and hearty, of the right material to last.

Will. Warranted to wash well, eh ? — though a little frayed by time.

Mr. N. Ha, ha ! capital, it — it — in short, it's — it's capital.

Will. (aside.) 'Tis all the same to me now, so as there's money in the case —

Mr. N. What say you, my dear Fitz-Gullem?

Will. (aside.) Oh, Lord! I had forgotten that I was Fitz-Gullem; well, it won't do to throw a good chance away, and as he insists upon it, I'll oblige him, and continue, until found out, the noble Fitz-Gullem.

Mr. N. (crossing, L.) But first, I'll order some refreshment.

Will. (R., aside.) And perhaps Ben will bring it; and if he sees me here before I have explained matters to him, my little game will be ended before it begins.

Mr. N. (at L. door, calling.) John! John!

Will. (R., aside.) John — then 'tis all right, and I shan't see Ben at present. *(aloud, advancing to C.)* Ah, yes, A. Noodle, refreshment by all means.

Mr. N. (L. C.) John, d'ye hear, sir — John!

Enter BENJAMIN, L. door.

Ben. You mean Benjamin, you know, but never mind.

Will. (aside, staggering back to R.) Ben — murder!

Ben. (starting.) What, Bill! Lord, old fellow, *(crosses to C.)* ain't I glad to see you! *(WILLIAM makes signs to him.)* What are you winking about? have you got something in your eye? why don't you speak to me in your usual affectionate manner?

Will. (aside to BEN.) I'll break your infernal neck!

Ben. Ah, that's it, that's the way I like to hear you talk. *(to Mr. NOODLE.)* He's very fond of me, sir — always exerting himself in my behalf; many a good whacking he has given me, I assure you.

Mr. N. (crossing, C.) Why, what is the fellow talking about?

Will. (R. C.) Haven't the smallest idea.

Ben. (L. C.) Brother Bill's a rum chap, ain't he, sir?

Mr. N. (C.) Blockhead! What do I know about your brother Bill?

Ben. Oh, you can't talk to him long without finding out what sort of stuff he is made of.

Mr. N. Why, where should I talk to him?

Ben. Where! why, here; what, didn't you know, this is my brother Bill.

Will. (R., aside.) Confound him! but I won't be flurried.

Mr. N. (C.) What does he mean?

Will. That's a puzzler; I have only one observation to make — he smells remarkably strong of liquor.

Mr. N. (shrinking from BEN.) I perceive it, even at this distance; go away, fellow, you are drunk.

Ben. (L. C.) Nonsense! it ain't possible I should be swipecy, when you only allows small beer.

Mr. N. (C.) And I insist that you instantly apologize to Mr. Fitz-Gullem.

Ben. Who's he? and what have I done to him?

Mr. N. This, sir, is Mr. Fitz-Gullem.

Ben. Get out; it's Bill Wiggles, my brother Bill; you see, brother Bill and me —

Will. (R.) A. Noodle, this fellow is becoming offensive. Who and what is he, for I never saw him before in all my life?

Ben. What, Bill! do you disown me — your own lawfully-begotten brother? — you don't mean it.

Will. (R.) Go away! (*crosses to C.*) I don't know you — (*seizing and shaking him.*) — I don't know you. (*releasing him.*) Go away! — d'ye hear!

Ben. (L. C.) It's his werry shake — and after such evidence as that, you'd try to persuade me that you are not my brother.

Will. (C.) Go, or I shall kick you.

Ben. Of course you will — that's the regular rotation: first you swears, next you shakes, and then you kicks! Don't disown me, Bill — think how fond we've always been of one another — think of brotherly love, and the many times you've punched my head; — and if I thought you was never to crack my skull any more, I should break my heart — I know I should. (*whimpering.*)

Will. (aside.) Poor Ben! but I'll make it up to him by and by. (*aloud.*) My dear A. Noodle, this fellow is not right — in fact, his head is all wrong. I understand such cases perfectly well, and I assure you that he is a dangerous maniac.

Mr. N. (R. C.) Bless me, yes, so he is; — how he stares with his eyes — that is, he — he — in short, he stares!

Ben. (L. C., whimpering.) Bill! won't you own me? Bill — (*shouting.*) — Bill! (*MR. NOODLE jumps back.*)

Will. (C.) Don't be frightened, A. Noodle — I'll manage him.

Mr. N. Don't drive him to violence — try the soothing system.

Will. I will. (*to BENJAMIN.*) You ugly, cross-grained, stupid ass —

Ben. (pleased.) That's right! go on, Bill — he's a ownin' on me now.

Will. I know nothing about you — never before saw or heard of you.

Ben. Oh, I must be out of my senses!

Will. Of course you are. You see he owns that he is mad.

Mr. N. Yes, yes; poor fellow — poor fellow!

Will. And now, unhappy lunatic, begone! Never again presume to claim me as your brother, or terrible will be the consequence.

Ben. I see how it is — now you have spent all my money, you are ashamed of me; won't know me, 'cause I'm a flunkey! You're a upstart, Bill — you always was! When we was only little 'uns, you always used to crow over me — we never played at ring-taw, that you didn't smug all my marlows — and whenever I bought anything nice, you used to eat it — and I says it once more again, you're a upstart! (*crossing quickly to C.*) Mr. Noodle — (*MR. NOODLE retreats to R. corner.*) — I'll explain the matter. (*C.*) You sees, brother Bill and me —

Will. (L. corner.) Get out — go and lie down!

Ben. (C.) I says it again, you're a upstart, Bill! and when you are alone by yourself, then, in your solitary moments, remember my solemn words — Billy, you're a upstart! (*stalks off, L. door.*)

Will. Very mad, indeed! but don't be alarmed, A. Noodle; he is not at present dangerous.

Mr. N. (R. C.) I hope not — dear, dear, how horrible! Shall I order the carriage, and have him taken to Bedlam?

Will. (L. C.) Not at present. (*aside.*) Poor Ben! that would be

coming it too strong. (*aloud.*) Fear nothing, A. Noodle; though tolerably boisterous, he is perfectly harmless.

Mr. N. Well, well, I rely on you; excuse me a moment; I must run to my sister, and — a mad footman — very disagreeable — it — it — in short, it's — it's disagreeable! (*toddles off, R. door.*)

Enter MARTHA, L. door.

Martha. Oh, sir, whatever have you been doing to Ben — John, I mean?

Will. I have been doing nothing to Ben-John; but, unhappily, Ben-John is crazy!

Martha. (L. c.) If I didn't think so — for when I asked him what was the matter, "Go along," says he, "you're a upstart!" Poor fellow! and I was beginning to take quite a liking to him.

Will. (R. c.) Were you really? (*aside.*) This is the affluent domestic, and uncommonly pretty, too!

Martha. What has driven him to his unhappy state?

Will. He didn't state; but I have reason to believe that love, which, some time or other, turns us all topsy-turvy —

Martha. La, sir, love has never turned me topsy-turvy.

Will. Then you are lucky.

Martha. But who is he in love with?

Will. Eh? — why — hem — a female! When I say "female," I mean a woman; and when I say "a woman," I mean a lady — a lady high in the world — and as he dwells in the kitchen, of course she is beyond his reach.

Martha. Oh, dear! — and I really thought he was in love with me.

Will. You are, then, anxious to be loved?

Martha. Yes — but for myself alone.

Will. Exactly; — perish the wretch who would court you only for your money! — You have some property, I believe? (*she nods.*) Ah! perish the wretch — Of course you wouldn't insist on your property being settled on yourself?

Martha. Certainly not, sir.

Will. Quite right; — why should you fear to trust your money to one to whom you had confided that far more precious treasure — your heart?

Martha. My sentiment exactly.

Will. And a noble sentiment it is. Sarah, I love you.

Martha. My name, sir, is Martha.

Will. Of course, I know it is. Martha, I adore you.

Martha. La, sir! you are joking.

Will. Joking! — no; serious — serious as a Methodist. Who would be blind to such charms! Mine is no mercenary love; and were you worth forty thousand pounds instead of — hem, instead of —

Martha. Four hundred.

Will. Instead of the sum aforesaid, my love would be all the same. (*aside.*) Four hundred's devilish little, though. (*aloud.*) Do you think you can love me?

Martha. I don't know till I try.

Will. And will you try?

Martha. Well, I'll think about it — I'll try to try.

Will. And when shall we be married?

Martha. Gracious! we must love one another first.

Will. And is it possible that you do not already love me? Can you have failed to appreciate this figure? — I'll not believe it: but do not doubt that you are dear to me — there are many reasons why I should adore you.

Martha. Many reasons?

Will. (aside.) Four hundred. *(aloud.)* Yes, you are lovely, virtuous, and in want —

Martha. What?

Will. Of a husband.

Martha. Oh, well, sir, I shall consider your proposal. If Ben had not lost his senses — though you are much better looking than Ben —

Will. I flatter myself.

Martha. And you are a gentleman, and master's friend — and so I'll — I'll consider of it. *(aside.)* And now I'll go and see if poor Ben is any better. *[Exit, L. door.]*

Will. Number One is booked — and a devilish pretty girl Number One is. Four hundred pounds, though — to sell myself for that! — sell! — pooh! — 'tis giving myself away.

Enter SERAPHINA NOODLE, R. door.

Seraph. Brother — oh, I beg pardon! — really — Mr. Fitz-Gullem, I believe?

Will. (starting.) Oh, pardon me! *(aside.)* This is the dromedary, with ten thousand pounds on her back; — she's an awful guy, but —

Seraph. Why do you start, sir?

Will. Why? — Oh, rapture and raspberry jam — such elegance! — such beauty! *(she simpers.)* — I never saw anything like you in all my life — *(aside.)* and, 'pon my word, I never did.

Seraph. Oh, sir, don't — pray don't!

Will. Make your mind easy, ma'am — I won't. Oh, you lovely creature of ten thousand pounds — charms, I mean! — your presence — oh, madam — I assure you, the sight of you quite upsets me; I feel in a state that, somehow — in fact, I feel, anyhow — in short, nohow; I feel as if I had loved you many years — full ten thousand; a heavy weight is on my heart — in fact, a ten thousand pound weight.

Seraph. Oh, sir, may I believe —

Will. Whatever you think proper, my ancient angel.

Seraph. Sir!

Will. Angelic, I mean. Will you be mine? — don't speak, but come to my arms.

Seraph. (sinking into his arms.) Oh, Mr. Fitz-Gullem!

Will. Oh, Miss Noodle!

Seraph. Really, the sensation of this moment —

Will. Very delightful, no doubt; but yours is but one sensation, while I have ten thousand. Miss Noodle, one chaste salute to bind the bargain.

Seraph. Oh, sir!

Will. (aside, having kissed her, and making a wry face.) Ugh, that's

worth all the money; however, I have got her. Number Two is booked and Number One floored.

Seraph. Oh, Mr. Fitz-Gullem, you will never suffer another to rival me in your love?

Will. There's no knowing what may happen; but at present the odds are greatly in your favor — ten thousand to four hundred.

Seraph. Oh, Mr. Fitz-Gullem, I'm yours forever.

Will. (aside.) Her forever can't last long, that's one comfort. (*to her.*) Your baptismal appellation is —

Seraph. Seraphina — and yours —

Will. William.

Seraph. (extending her arms.) William!

Will. (ditto.) Seraphina! (*they embrace.*)

Enter BENJAMIN, R. door, and starts — they see him.

Ben. (L. c.) Bill, you're a upstart, and you're a swindler. Not content with doing me out of my young woman, you wants to commit bigamy with the old 'un.

Seraph. (R.) Mr. Fitz-Gullem, what does the fellow mean?

Ben. Fitz-Gullem! — Fitz-humbug.

Will. He doesn't know what he means; he is mad — awfully mad!

Enter MR. NOODLE, R. door.

Mr. N. Oh, dear. (*R. corner.*) The lunatic here again!

Will. (C.) Yes, A. Noodle, and in a fearful state — see how he foams at the mouth.

Ben. (L. c.) None of your jaw, Bill. Mr. Noodle, (*crossing to C. — SERAPHINA and MR. NOODLE, R. — WILLIAM, L.*) hasn't a man a right to claim his brother?

Mr. N. (R. corner.) Yes, yes, my good fellow. (*soothingly.*) Your brother, of course — a natural —

Ben. (C.) No, not a natural brother, but a real legitimate buffspring. Well, that's my brother — my brother Bill. Oh, you blackguard!

Will. (L.) A. Noodle, have you such a thing as a strait waistcoat?

Ben. My waistcoat is straight enough, and I don't want any other.

Will. You must have a very strait waistcoat, for your mind is remarkably crooked. If you wanted a brother, could you claim none but me, you ill-looking specimen of humanity?

Ben. What? (*starts violently — MR. NOODLE and SERAPHINA huddle together in R. corner.*) Bill, you're a upstart. Disown me, will you? — very well, then I won't own you — you're not my brother Bill.

Will. There, you hear, A. Noodle — a slight interval of reason.

Mr. N. Yes, yes, poor fellow.

Seraph. Oh, he so terrifies me; take him away and shave his head.

Ben. What should they do that for? If I was bald, you wouldn't lend me your wig. (*she screams.*)

Will. Be off, you villain, or I'll murder you.

Ben. Ah, do; complete your hinfamy. Kill your brother, and be hanged for infanticide.

Mr. N. Oh, very mad — very mad, indeed.

Ben. I won't be trampled on no longer. I'll show you I'm a man — a man, old Noodle! Bill — I says it again — you're a upstart. Marry that old judy there, if you like. (*SERAPHINA screams.*) But Martha's my object; she's a nice gal; she's got some money. I'll marry her, and then — speak to me if you dare. One brother to disown t'other brother — but I won't have it!

Will. Secure him!

Ben. Keep off! Bill, you're a upstart. Noodle, you're a ass. I'm afraid of nobody. I feels strong enough to knock the house down, and so, here goes.

Strides about, upsetting chairs and tables, throws sofa pillow at SERAPHINA, who screams and runs off, R. door — hammers NOODLE, who crawls under sofa — pitches into WILLIAM, who tries to seize him, then making his way to C. door, is met by SIMON — throws another pillow at his head, upsets him, and rushes off, C. door, to L., followed by WILLIAM.

MARTHA runs on, L. door.

Simon. (on ground.) Murder — fire — thieves!

Martha. (C.) Oh! please, Mr. Noodle, don't kill poor Ben — John, I mean.

Mr. N. (crawling from under sofa.) The fellow is raving mad! a confirmed, horrible lunatic!

Martha. (R. C.) I don't think he is quite right; for he still insists that Mr. Fitz-Gullem is his brother Bill.

Mr. N. (L. C.) Unhappy wretch! But, Martha, put the room to rights.

Martha. (looking about.) Oh, goodness! — he has turned the furniture upside down.

Simon. (C., at back, sitting on floor.) And [put the live stock wrong end upwards. (*coming forward, R. C.*) But what was it that girl said about Mr. Fitz-Gullem?

Mr. N. (C.) That was the brave and noble fellow you saw scampering after that wretched maniac.

Simon. (R. C.) Was it? (*aside.*) Curse his impudence! (*aloud.*) And that new servant of yours —

Mr. N. As I told you, mad, and claims Mr. Fitz-Gullem as his brother.

Simon. Does he? (*aside.*) Confederates, of course.

Martha. (L. C., having arranged chairs, &c.) There, that's better. And now I'll go and see if poor Ben is worse. [*Exit, C. door.*]

Mr. N. Simon, that maniac must be secured.

Simon. Oh! I'll secure 'em both, never fear!

Mr. N. Both! What do you mean?

Simon. Oh, nothing — only —

Mr. N. Get a very strong strait waistcoat for the madman, and then —

Simon. I will — and bind him to a chair.

Mr. N. You will need assistance.

Simon. All right. (*aside.*) And then I'll secure Mr. Fitz-Gullem.

Enter WILLIAM, c. door, down c.

Will. I chased the poor lunatic all over the house, and lost him, until attracted by your sister's screams, I found that he had rushed into her bed room; and after shaking her violently, he seized her favorite tabby, and hurled it out of window — then again bolted down stairs and into the coal-hole, in which lively receptacle I have now secured him.

Mr. N. (L.) You hear, Simon. By-the-by, this is Mr. Fitz-Gullem. Mr. Fitz-Gullem —

Will. (c.) That will do, A. Noodle. (*to SIMON.*) I hope, sir, we shall become better acquainted.

Simon. (R.) We shall, sir, you may rely on it — (*aside.*) — and sooner than you expect, Mr. Fitz-Gullem. [*Erit, c. door.*]

Mr. N. (L. c.) I have arranged that the madman will trouble us no more.

Will. (c.) How do you mean?

Mr. N. I will explain presently. I will now run and comfort poor Seraphina. (*crosses to R.*) A madman in the house, Mr. Fitz-Gullem, is not pleasant — it — it — in short, it's not pleasant. [*Erit, R. door.*]

Will. (c.) What has A. Noodle arranged to do with Ben, I wonder. I'll not have him ill-used. Poor Ben! — when I have firmly secured the elderly Miss Noodle and her ten thousand, I shall soon make it right with him.

Enter WILHELMINA, R. door.

Wilhel. What could mean that dreadful noise? (*seeing WILLIAM.*) Good heavens!

Will. (L. c., starting.) Good gracious! — the lady that —

Wilhel. (R. c.) The gentleman that I saw at —

Will. Mrs. Bounceabout's. (*going to her.*) Oh, charming angel, who walked into my heart while dawdling through a polka — and do I behold you once again! You know I love you — you, and only you — never loved anybody but you — must have you, or I'll forthwith hang myself on a yew tree.

Wilhel. Will you? But certainly your having sought me out is a proof that —

Will. Sought you — eh! yes, of course. (*aside.*) She may as well believe so.

Wilhel. (R. c.) And for your friend to gain admittance to this house, in the assumed character of a servant, was really an admirable stratagem.

Will. (L. c.) Friend! — eh! — ah, ah! (*aside.*) That's Ben.

Wilhel. I recognized him at once.

Will. (surprised.) What! you know then who he really is?

Wilhel. Certainly.

Will. Oh!

Wilhel. The eccentric gentleman that was with you on the evening that —

Will. Ah, yes — exactly. (*aside.*) It's all right. (*taking her hand.*) Ah! if I dared but hope —

Enter MR. NOODLE, R. door.

Mr. N. I am afraid you mustn't; for I have long suspected that an attachment to — to — and I was right; for sister Serry has confessed to me that some insinuating scoundrel who was at Mrs. Bounceabout's last night —

Wilhel. (c.) Hush, uncle — hush!

Will. (l. c., *jumping about.*) Hurrah! — tol-de-rol!

Mr. N. Good gracious! — is he, too, going crazy!

Will. (*crossing, c.*) A. Noodle, in me you behold that insinuating scoundrel! (*turning and embracing WILHELMINA.*) and a happy scoundrel I am!

Enter SERAPHINA, R. door.

Seraph. Mr. Fitz-Gullem, (*coming to R. c.*) what are you about? Do you forget, sir, that you are engaged to me?

Will. (c.) Oh, Lord! (*aside.*) Will nobody oblige me, and strangle this old she-dragon?

Wilhel. (l. c.) What did you say, aunt?

Mr. N. (R.) Ay, what did you say?

Seraph. (R. c.) That Mr. Fitz-Gullem has offered me his hand.

Wilhel. Ah!

Mr. N. Do you mean it?

Seraph. Of course I do.

Mr. N. And you accepted him?

Will. (*aside.*) Of course she did!

Wilhel. Oh, base, deceitful man!

Will. I love but you! (*SERAPHINA approaches him.*) No, no, not you — go away! (*to WILHELMINA.*) But you — you — only you!

Enter MARTHA, L. door.

Martha. Me, you mean; you said you would marry me, and you must, or I'll bring an action of *crim. con.* against you.

Seraph. (R. c.) Oh, wretch!

Wilhel. (l. c.) Oh, this is too much!

Will. (c.) I should think it was — twice too much.

Mr. N. (R.) Mr. Fitz-Gullem, this trifling with the feelings of my family —

Will. I assure you, A. Noodle, my feelings are not trifling just now; but it's all your fault, you old Mormonite — you told me to do it, and now, by the living jingo, I have done it.

Mr. N. But that I am so deeply indebted to you, sir, I — I should — I — in short, I — I should — leave my house at once, or —

Will. Never, (*embracing WILHELMINA.*) unless this angel —

Martha. (l. c.) Don't do that, sir — you belong to me.

Seraph. (R. c.) No, hussy, to me.

Will. (c., *still holding WILHELMINA.*) Ladies, 'pon my honor, I am not worth contending for! Oh, here's a nice mess I am in!

Martha. (seizing him.) I must have you, 'cause Ben's a maniac.

Seraph. (seizing him.) I cannot afford to part with you.

Will. Poor soul! she feels it's her last chance. *(they pull him.)*
Ladies, (still holding WILHELMINA.) don't lug my coat so; if it's only that you want, you may have it between you — or my waistcoat, or my — or any other portion of my toggery?

SIMON SQUIB *appears at c. door with two POLICEMEN.*

Seraph. (R. C., lugging him.) You are mine!

Martha. (L. C., lugging him.) No, mine!

Simon. (down L. with POLICEMEN.) No, he belongs to these gentlemen.

Will. (R. C.) The devil I do — what for?

Mr. N. (R.) Simon, what do you mean? This is Mr. Fitz-Gullem.

Simon. Alias Nobble — alias Flash Jemmy — alias a dozen other aliases — one of the most notorious swell-mobsmen in all London! Secure your prisoner.

(POLICEMEN walk quickly over to R. C., and arrest WILLIAM — the three WOMEN simultaneously scream and faint — MARTHA in SIMON'S arms, L. corner; SERAPHINA in MR. NOODLE'S, R. corner; and WILHELMINA in WILLIAM'S, R. C.)

Enter BENJAMIN, c. door, and down c. — his face black, a strait waistcoat on, and dragging a chair to which he is fastened.

Ben. (walking backwards and forwards.) Look here! — here's a picture! — I say, *(turning round and shouting.)* here's a picture!

Will. (R. C.) And here's another — specimens of still life! But there's no further occasion now for mystery — so just clear this matter up for me, Ben, there's a good fellow.

Ben. (c.) Me! I don't know you, my good man — never saw you before in all my life!

Will. Now, Ben —

Ben. Get out! you are mad — you ill-looking specimen of humanity!

Will. Do tell 'em I'm your brother!

Ben. Oh, yes; this is brotherly love, ain't it?

Will. Of course it is — but, *(looking at WOMEN.)* what sort of love do you call this?

Ben. Bill, you're an upstart!

Will. I wish you could persuade these ladies to become upstarts!

Ben. I said you'd come to the dogs, and now you see you have come to the bobbies.

Will. No, the bobbies — curse 'em! — have come to me.

(POLICEMAN passes behind to L. corner and whispers to SIMON.)

Mr. N. (R.) Serry, my arms are dropping off!

Simon. (L., to MARTHA.) Young woman, wake up.

Ben. (c.) If you'd been content, like me, to work for your living —

Will. (R. C.) Pooh! you know I never liked business.

Ben. At any rate, you've got your hands full now.

Women. (starting suddenly up.) Wretch! — monster!

Will. Oh, if you are going on in that way, you had better go off again.

Simon. Here's some mistake, it seems — this is not Fitz-Gullem, after all.

Will. Certainly not.

Mr. N. (R. corner.) Not! (*crosses to R. C.*) Who then are you?

Will. (C.) A young man who has had money and spent it, but who in future —

Ben. (L. of WILLIAM.) Is anybody going to cut me open, and take me out of this thingamy?

Will. Brother Ben! — for, observe, this is my brother —

Mr. N. And not mad!

Will. As sensible as I am.

Ben. That doesn't say much for my understanding.

Will. Ben, you will see that all I have done has been for your good as well as for my own.

Ben. I don't know whether you have benefited yourself; but this strait thingamy ain't done me much good, I think; and I'm sure it ain't agreeable to drag this chair about arter me, like a dog with a tin kettle tied to his tail.

Mr. N. (to WILLIAM.) Well, well — my niece, it seems, loves you; so only prove yourself worthy, and I shall be able to procure you a lucrative situation under government: A. Noodle is not without interest — the Noodles have always had influence with ministers.

Ben. (L. C.) Yes, there's always lots of 'em what's got government appointments.

Mr. N. (crossing C. to BEN, politely, and bowing.) You are right, sir.

Ben. (L. C., shouting.) Is anybody going to cut me open!

MR. NOODLE runs over to R. corner — POLICEMEN release BEN, and taking chair, waistcoat, &c., go off, C. door.

Will. (C., to WILHELMINA, who is on his R.) My angel, I shall endeavor to render myself worthy of your love. (*crosses R. C. to SERAPHINA.*) Miss Noodle — (*she passes him disdainfully, and comes to C. — he follows her.*) I am sorry for you, but —

Ben. (L. of SERAPHINA.) Better luck next time, old gal.

Seraph. (C., to BEN.) Ugh! (*to WILLIAM.*) I hate you. (*crosses to R. C., next to MR. NOODLE.*)

Will. (C.) Very glad to hear it.

Simon. (L. corner.) Nicely I'm served, Mr. Noodle! but I'll tell my father, see if I don't.

Mr. N. (R. corner.) I am sorry; but I — I — in short, I'm sorry; but —

Simon. Pooh! — humbug! I mustn't go home single, or I shall be laughed at. (*to MARTHA.*) This young woman, I dare say, wants a husband.

Martha. I'm going to have one — eh, Ben?

Ben. (C. L. of WILLIAM.) Eh, Miss Muggles, I shan't forbid the banns. Bill, I believe in you again, for I am going to marry Martha, and she has got some property, and that *will* be for my good.

Mr. N. But I want to know —

Will. Sorry for it, for you can have no further information at present — for I have something to say to those who are entirely in the secret ; 'tis their favorable opinion we must solicit, for on their verdict depends the future prosperity of—

Ben. “Brother Bill and Me.”

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©

[No. 15]

ONE ON BOTH SIDES.

A FARCE.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

JOHN MADDISON MORTON.



BOSTON:
CHARLES H. SPENCER,
203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1870, Feb. 4.
 1st
 Wm. F. Spencer,
 of Boston.
 DONE ON BOTH SIDES.

CHARACTERS.

	Royal Lyceum, London, '47.	Boston Museum, 1865.
Mr. Whiffles	Mr. F. MATTHEWS.	Mr. J. H. RING.
Mr. John Brownjohn .	Mr. CHAS. MATHEWS.	Mr. J. WILSON.
Mr. Pygmalion Philbbs .	Mr. BUCKSTONE.	Mr. WM. WARREN.
Mrs. Whiffles	Mrs. C. JONES.	Mrs. J. E. VINCENT.
Lydia	Miss MARSHALL.	Mrs. T. M. HUNTER.

COSTUMES.

MR. WHIFFLES. — Gray colored loose coat, nankeen breeches and gaiters, shoes, flowered waistcoat, blue bird's eye neckcloth, tied in a large bow, kid gloves. 2d dress — Green coat and white neckcloth; the rest as before.

BROWNJOHN. — Green Newmarket cut coat, blue and white plaid waistcoat, white cord trousers, patent boots, black silk neckcloth tied in a large bow, kid gloves. 2d dress — Black dress coat, double breasted white waistcoat, black trousers, black silk neckcloth, patent boots, white kid gloves.

PHIBBS. — White Chesterfield, edged with black, faced with a bright red plaid, black buttons, single-breasted brown shooting jacket, red striped waistcoat, buckskin breeches, top boots, white hat, blue neckcloth.

MRS. WHIFFLES. — Fancy pattern muslin de laine gown, cap, brown holland apron and sleeves, small shawl.

LYDIA. — Blue striped muslin gown, apron.

Time in Representation — One hour.

DONE ON BOTH SIDES.

SCENE. — *An apartment, simply furnished, doors R. H. and L. H.; windows, R. and L. C.; fireplace, R. H.; sideboard, with crockery, &c., at L. H.; a loo table, with cover, in centre of stage; a smaller table at R. H., near fireplace; chairs, &c.*

WHIFFLES discovered kneeling at the fireplace, and rubbing a copper coal-scuttle with great energy. MRS. WHIFFLES cleaning the window with a cloth.

2. *Whif.* (*pushing coal-scuttle away.*) O, bother the coal-scuttle! The more I try to get a polish on it, the more I can't.

Mrs. W. You needn't abuse the poor, helpless, unprotected coal-scuttle, Mr. Whiffles.

Whif. I merely say, Mrs. W., and I say it emphatically, that this copper receptacle for fuel is making a very ungrateful return for the liberal amount of friction that I've been lavishing upon it for the last three quarters of an hour. (*rising.*) O, my back! Jemima, Jemima, come and straighten me!

Mrs. W. What a hurry you are in, to be sure! Wait a little.

Whif. Unfeeling woman! You wouldn't have me go about describing a semicircle for the rest of my life, would you?

Mrs. W. (*coming down, and helping him.*) Well, there —

Whif. Thank ye. Ahem! Mrs. Whiffles, since I listened to your advice, and consented to break up our establishment —

Mrs. W. Our establishment! Ha! ha! consisting of one scrubby servant girl —

Whif. And a charity boy, twice a week, to clean the knives and forks, Mrs. W. You won't overlook that important item, I hope. However, since that period six months have elapsed, during which time you must confess that I have applied myself with considerable zeal — I might say, enthusiasm — to the various occupations of household drudgery that have fallen to my lot; while you have attended to the cooking, and our daughter Lydia to the washing, ironing, darning, and mending department, I have shaken carpets, cleaned stoves, inclusive of fenders and fire-irons; initiated myself into the practical properties of blacklead and hearthstone; polished tables, chairs, boots and shoes. But I now candidly confess, Mrs. Whiffles, that I have had, if not too much, at least quite enough, of it. In other words, Mrs. W., we must keep a servant!

(3)

Mrs. W. Mr. W., we can't afford it. We must be economical. If we were not, could we live as comfortably as we do?

Whif. Comfortably! (*rubbing his back.*) Well, perhaps my *Jemima* is right, after all.

Mrs. W. Perhaps? Mr. W., did you ever know *Jemima* in the wrong, sir? Depend upon it, it is much better to be envied than pitied. Thanks to your exertions, added to mine and *Lydia's*, there's not a house in *Arabella Row*, *Pimlico*, can boast of more credit or respectability than ours; and if we can only get our precious *Lydia* comfortably settled —

Whif. But there's the rub. I don't see any chance of it.

Mrs. W. When did you ever see anything in your life, Mr. W., unless it was thrust under your very nose? How is it, I should like to know, that our friends and acquaintances consider us to be so much better to do in the world than we really are? Simply because we give our friends and acquaintances tea and muffins every other Monday throughout the year. And where do those "teas and muffins" come from, Mr. W.? Why, from the money we save by sending the servant about her business, and doing the work ourselves.

Whif. Invaluable *Jemima*! What you say is perfectly true. Egad, I do believe my neighbors take me for a retired Lord of the Treasury, or a Commander-in-Chief on half pay, instead of a poor devil of a superannuated exciseman, with a paltry hundred a year.

Mrs. W. Never mind their mistake, if we can profit by it; and, as I said before, if we can only get our darling *Lydia* comfortably and genteelly settled —

Whif. But, as I said before, I don't see that our darling *Lydia* is one jot nearer finding a husband than she was when I first took to beating carpets, cleaning stoves, inclusive of fenders —

Mrs. W. Now do hold your tongue! I've had quite enough of that.

Whif. To be candid with you, so have I, and a trifle to spare.

Mrs. W. (*mysteriously.*) Whiffles, what if I were to tell you that *Lydia* had made an impression?

Whif. No!

Mrs. W. A conquest.

Whif. No! Who's the unhappy victim? — I mean, who's the fortunate individual?

Mrs. W. Listen. Don't you remember, about three weeks ago a young gentleman picking you up out of the gutter in Fleet Street?

Whif. I can't say I do; but I perfectly remember his knocking me into it.

Mrs. W. A mere accident, for which, while you were lying insensible, he most handsomely apologized.

Whif. What was the use of his apologizing to me when I was insensible?

Mrs. W. Never mind. Well, last Tuesday evening, at *Mrs. Broadside's* tea-party, who should I spy in one corner of the room, with cup of coffee in one hand and a piece of buttered toast in the other, but your young friend —

Whif. My young friend! The fellow that knocked me —

Mrs. W. Never mind. O, Whiffles! such a gentlemanly looking

person ; and, from what I managed to squeeze out of Mrs. Broad-sides, just the young man to push his way in the world.

Whif. I can answer for his pushing his way in Fleet Street.

Mrs. W. Never mind. Well, Mr. Brownjohn (for that's the gentleman's name) kept his eye fixed on Lydia the whole evening ; in short, he looked at her as you used to look at me, Toby, before you popped the question. O, Toby, that look of yours — I think I see it now. (*WHIFFLES looks tenderly.*) No, it wasn't that at all. (*WHIFFLES tries again.*) That's not a bit like it, sir.

Whif. Isn't it ? It's such a plaguy long time ago.

Mrs. W. Well, Toby, Mr. Brownjohn would insist upon seeing us home ; of course, I couldn't say no. And then he requested permission to call ; of course, I said yes.

Whif. Don't you think you've been rather precipitate ?

Mrs. W. Not at all ; for I've been instituting inquiries respecting Mr. Brownjohn all round the neighborhood, for the last two days, and the result is in the highest degree satisfactory. In the first place, as to his domestic habits, he never comes home late at night —

Whif. That's good !

Mrs. W. But always early in the morning.

Whif. O !

Mrs. W. Then, I find, he's deep in all his tradesmen's books —

Whif. That doesn't look well.

Mrs. W. On the contrary ; for, if he wasn't well off, do you suppose they'd give him credit ? No, no. Depend upon it, he's the husband for Lydia.

Whif. Well, but when does the gentleman intend to call ?

Mrs. W. He didn't say.

Whif. That's a pity. It would be rather awkward if he should happen to pop in, and find me polishing up my friend there. (*points to the scuttle.*)

Mrs. W. No fear of that ; he's too well bred to call in the morning. (*Loud rat tat at the street door.*)

Whif. & } What's that ?

Mrs. W. }

(*WHIFFLES runs to window, R. C., and Mrs. WHIFFLES to window, L. C., and look out.*)

Enter LYDIA at door, L. E., with a tray, on which is a pile of linen ; her gown is pinned up, and her sleeves turned up.

Lydia. Here, mamma ; I've washed and ironed all the things. One table-cloth, three towels, five pair of socks, two tea-cloths, one night-cap —

Mrs. W. Hush ! it's he ! (*at window.*)

Lydia. Who ?

Mrs. W. Mr. Brownjohn ! (*another loud knock.*) He's knocking again ! Put the things away, Lydia, while I run down and open the door. (*snatching cloth off loo table, which is highly polished.*)

Whif. But won't your opening the door look rather odd ?

Mrs. W. Not at all. I'll tell him the footman's gone out on an errand. (*going out.*)

Whif. Stop! Inconsiderate *Jemima*! you've got your apron on! *(she throws off her apron, and runs off at door, R. H.)*

Lydia. Now, papa, let's put these stockings out of sight; make haste. *(gives him the tray to hold, while she puts the linen into drawer of sideboard.)*

Whif. He's coming up! *(thrusts tray and all into sideboard drawer, then runs across, puts coal-scuttle in its proper place, and takes up the large leather he has been using — doesn't know what to do with it, and at last thrusts it into his coat pocket.)*

Mrs. W. (outside.) No apology, *Mr. Brownjohn*, I beg. This way, *Mr. Brownjohn*.

She enters at L. H. D., followed by BROWNJOHN.

Brownj. Really, my dear *Mrs. Whiffles*, I'm quite horrified that you should have had the trouble. *(crosses to R. C.)*

Mrs. W. Don't allude to it. Good gracious! I declare, you're quite wet! I'd no idea it rained!

Brownj. A slight shower, that's all. *(shakes his hat over table.)* You see, *Mrs. Whiffles*, I have lost no time in availing myself of your kind permission to pay my respects.

Mrs. W. O, sir, I'm sure I'm delighted, and so is *Mr. Whiffles*. *Whiffles!* *(sees WHIFFLES rubbing the table with his coat tail.)* *Mr. Whiffles!*

Whif. Yes, my dear!

Mrs. W. *Mr. Brownjohn*, *Mr. Whiffles*; *Mr. Whiffles*, *Mr. Brownjohn*.

Brownj. *(aside, after examining WHIFFLES.)* Ah! a stupid, good-tempered looking specimen of antiquity enough. *(shakes WHIFFLES' hand.)* *Mr. Whiffles*, I'm delighted to make your acquaintance. *(puts his hat on table; WHIFFLES instantly takes it off again.)* No, no! *(puts hat on table.)*

Whif. Well, but — *(taking hat off table again.)*

Brownj. O, very well; if you insist upon it, you may hold it. *(Crosses to LYDIA.)* Miss — *Sophia* — *Whiffles* —

Lydia. *Lydia!*

Brownj. Of course — *Lydia*. Miss *Lydia Whiffles*, will — *(sees Mrs. WHIFFLES making signs to LYDIA to unpin her gown, &c.)* What's the matter? *(LYDIA hastily arranges her gown.)* I say, Miss *Lydia Whiffles* will pardon my not addressing her before; but the epicure always reserves the *bonne bouche* till the last. *(bowing.)*

Mrs. W. *(aside to WHIFFLES.)* *Bonne bouche!* isn't that elegant?

Whif. I dare say it is, only I don't happen to know what it means.

Brownj. *(Aside, and looking about him.)* Everything looks remarkably clean and comfortable here; and there's a sort of quiet, snug, three-and-a-quarter per cent. look about *Whiffles* that's unmistakable. Then the daughter is really charming.

Lydia. *(aside.)* How he's staring at me, to be sure. Luckily, I don't mind that.

Brownj. *(aside.)* Nevertheless, I won't speak out till I've fathomed the depth a little. *(aloud.)* Allow me to assure you, my dear *Whiffles*

I beg pardon — I ought to have said *Mister*, and, if you insist on the *Mister* —

Whif. O, both r! I don't care about the Mister.

Brownj. Then I'll omit the Mister. As I was saying, Whiffles — my dear Whiffles — ever since I have resided in this respectable locality, I have heard so much of you! I may say, the very atmosphere seems charged with the name of Whiffles. For my part, I go to bed with Whiffles, I get up with Whiffles, I breathe Whiffles, I eat Whiffles, I drink Whiffles; in short, you haunt me, Whiffles! 'Pon my life, you do!

Whif. Dear, dear! I'm sure, I'm very sorry —

Brownj. Sorry! You ought to be flattered — delighted! for, with me, the influence of the name of Whiffles is such, that I may safely aver, affirm, make oath, and declare, that I never lay my head on my pillow at night, or raise it again in the morning, without feeling a sensation of craving, a sort of aching void —

Whif. Well, do you know, that's just my case, sometimes. But I find it goes away after breakfast.

Brownj. I'm afraid you misunderstand me. I mean, I have felt that there's something wanting to complete my happiness.

Whif. And that was —

Brownj. You'll never guess; so don't try. That necessary ingredient to my felicity was neither more nor less than your knocker!

Whif. My knocker!

Brownj. I mean the application of it — the opportunity of familiarizing my hand to it. In short, I panted for the privilege of dropping in upon you at all hours of the day — of breakfasting, lunching, dining, teating, supping, and now and then taking a bed of you. And what my ingenuity failed to bring about, kind fortune accomplished for me. And now, Whiffles, I'll never leave you again — (*slaps him on the back*) — never!

Whif. Thank ye. But I don't exactly —

Brownj. Understand? The deuce you don't! Surely you remember our fortunate meeting in Fleet Street?

Whif. What, when you knocked me into the —

Brownj. Exactly. You droll fellow, you. I see you never forget a good thing! Funny Whiffles! The fact is, I was in a devil of a hurry to get to my broker's, having a few spare thousands to invest. (*with emphasis.*)

Mrs. W. (*aside to WHIFFLES.*) A few spare thousands! You hear that, Mr. Whiffles?

Brownj. Ah, Whiffles, you little know how much I am indebted to that lucky accident.

Whif. O, yes, I do. I was obliged to order a new pair of trousers, which I couldn't get made under seventeen and sixpence.

Lydia. Fifteen and ninepence, papa.

Mrs. W. (*making signs to her.*) Hush!

Whif. But, my dear sir, if you were in such a devil of a hurry, why did you walk?

Brownj. Bless you, I always walk when I'm in a hurry; when I particularly wish to be behind time, I ride. Ha! ha! I say, Whiffles, capital furniture you've got here — must have cost you a deal of money.

Whif. (*with affected grandeur.*) Really, I forget —

Lydia. I don't, papa; for you know you would insist upon my going with you to all those dark, poking little brokers' shops —

Mrs. W. (aside to LYDIA.) Hush!

Brownj. (aside.) Holloa! what's all this? Poking little brokers' shops! Trousers, fifteen and ninepence! Mine cost me two pounds — at least, they *will* cost me two pounds, when I pay for them. Umph! I begin to have my suspicions. Perhaps they're not so well off, after all — unless my friend Whiffles is a bit of a Jew. What if he is? So much the better. The less he spends, the more he'll have to leave. (*aloud.*) How the deuce you contrive to get such a polish on your table, I can't imagine.

Whif. Ah, it takes a deal of rubbing, I can tell you. I've been at it for half an hour this morning.

Brownj. You?

Whif. Yes — no — I mean — that is —

Mrs. W. (interposes.) He means he has been superintending the servant. (*aside to WHIFFLES.*) Toby, you're putting your foot in it.

Whif. Wheugh! (*taking the leather out of his pocket, and wiping his face with it.*)

Brownj. Holloa! what's that?

Whif. (forgetting himself.) This? Oh, this is the leather that I've been rubbing —

Mrs. W. The silver with — (*interposing.*)

Whif. No, the copper. (*Mrs. WHIFFLES gives him a pinch.*) Oh, yes — exactly — I mean the silver — it's a little eccentricity I have. I always do it, and very hard work it is, too.

Brownj. (aside.) Silver! That sounds well — and "very hard work, too." Then there's plenty of it: they must be well off. (*aloud.*) perfectly agree with you, Whiffles — I certainly do like my plate to look clean.

Whif. Oh, I've nothing to do with that; Mrs. Whiffles washes the plates and dishes.

Brownj. Eh?

Mrs. W. (coming hastily between them.) Ha! ha! ha! Whiffles is such a wag! (*giving WHIFFLES another pinch.*) The fact is, Mr. Brownjohn, the day before yesterday we gave Nancy a holiday —

Whif. Who's Nancy?

Lydia. Yes, who's Nancy, mamma?

Mrs. W. (aside to LYDIA.) Hush! (*aloud.*) Why, the cook. (*aside to WHIFFLES.*) How stupid you are!

Whif. Oh — ah — yes! The fact is, I never know any of the creatures' names.

LYDIA, aside, expresses her astonishment.

Brownj. (aside.) Any of their names? Quite an establishment! They must be well off.

Mrs. W. Well, you must know, that I was complaining to Mr. Whiffles that — that — (*aside to WHIFFLES.*) What did I call her?

Whif. (bothered.) Eh? Oh, Patty.

Mrs. W. I say, I was complaining that Patty didn't do her work —

Brownj. (aside.) Nancy! Patty! Two of them! — That looks well.

Mrs. W. When — ha! ha! ha! I can't help laughing — Mr. Whiffles said I found fault without a cause, and offered to bet me a wager that I couldn't do the girl's work in double the time; and so —

ha! ha!—just for the fun of the thing, I accepted the wager, and won it with five minutes to spare. Ha! ha! ha! (*aside to WHIFFLES.*) Why don't you laugh?

Whif. Ha! ha! ha!

Lydia. (*aside.*) What can papa and mamma be telling all these fibs about?

Whif. (*aside.*) I very nearly let the cat out of the bag. Never mind, I'll make up for it. (*aloud.*) By the by, Mrs. Whiffles, talking of servants, where is—I say, where is—(*aside to her.*) What do you call her? I know. (*aloud.*) Where is Peggy?

Brownj. (*aside.*) Peggy? Another of them!

Mrs. W. Why, don't you know I sent her out with John, the footman?

LYDIA holds up her hands in astonishment.

Brownj. (*aside.*) John, the footman! That settles it—they must be rolling in wealth.

Lydia. (*aside.*) Insanity has evidently broken out in the family, and papa and mamma are the first victims.

Whif. Then, Mrs. Whiffles—(*assuming grandeur.*)—Once for all, I will not allow my servants to be continually sent out of the house without my permission.

Brownj. (*aside.*) Holloa! Whiffles is getting lively.

Whif. And let me tell you, madam—

Brownj. (*interposing.*) My dear Whiffles!

Whif. Excuse me, Mr. Brownjohn. I say, madam, if this happens again, I'll instantly break up our town establishment and return to Whiffles Park. (*aside.*) There I had him.

Brownj. (*aside.*) Whiffles Park! It's too much—I'm getting quite bewildered.

Whif. You hear, madam! (*aside to MRS. WHIFFLES.*) I'll go and finish dusting the next room, and be sure you don't let him come in till you hear me cough three times. (*aloud, and assuming his grandeur.*) Remember, madam! Mr. Brownjohn, your most obedient. (*going off at door, L. H., stops, and calls.*) Sally, tell the coachman I want him!

[*Exit, L. H. D.*]

Brownj. (*aside.*) Sally! Coachman! Egad, I am in luck! I'd no notion of anything of this sort. I must clinch matters at once. (*aloud.*) My dear Mrs. Whiffles, since you are so very pressing, I at once accept your invitation!

Mrs. W. My invitation! (*hesitatingly.*)

Brownj. Which you gave me at Mrs. Broadside's the other evening. Your flattering words on that occasion were, "My dear Mr. Brownjohn, you must come and dine with us"—with an amiable emphasis on the *must*.

Lydia. Yes, mamma, a decided emphasis on the *must*.

Mrs. W. Yes—of course—I perfectly remember—

Brownj. I thought so. (*aside.*) Considering she never opened her lips on the subject, she must have an extraordinary memory. (*aloud.*) To which I replied, "Excellent Mrs. Whiffles, I will"—and here I am.

Mrs. W. Yes—I see—and now—what day shall we say? To-morrow fortnight, or Monday three weeks? But perhaps that's too early?

Brownj. By several degrees not early enough, Mrs. Whiffles. I'm come to dine with you to-day.

Mrs. W. To-day? Well, now, that's so kind of you. (*aside to LYDIA.*) There isn't an atom of anything in the house. (*aloud.*) But you see, Mr. Brownjohn, we dine so preposterously late —

Brownj. Can't be too late for me. (*aside.*) I very often have to wait for my dinner.

Mrs. W. But, to-day, somehow or other, we happen to dine so ridiculously early —

Brownj. So much the better, for I'm absurdly hungry.

Mrs. W. (*aside.*) Here's a pretty situation! I must put him off.

Lydia. (*aside to Mrs. WHIFFLES.*) Oh, mamma! he'll think it so very strange, if he doesn't dine with us.

Mrs. W. (*aside to LYDIA.*) He'll think it still more strange if he *does* dine with us, and gets nothing to eat.

Brownj. Now, pray, Mrs. Whiffles, don't put yourself out of the way on my account — the plainest dinner possible, I beg. A little soup — fish, if you have it — if not, game — pastry to follow. Then dessert — a pine, or hot-house grapes, or some trifle of that sort. The whole to conclude with a bottle or two of old Whiffles Madeira — I mean, Whiffles' old Madeira — and — I'm satisfied.

Mrs. W. (*aside.*) Moderate creature! (*aloud.*) Well, but —

Brownj. Not a word more, I beg. I'll just tell my rascal that I shan't want the carriage to-day, and be back again immediately. (*going.*) My compliments to Whiffles, and the sooner he puts the champagne in ice the better. (*looking at his watch.*) Dear me! half past twelve. I ought to have been at home to receive the Marquis of Guzzleton. Ha! ha! Considering this is the third time that Guzzleton has solicited an interview, he'll be rather annoyed. Never mind — hang Guzzly! Guzzly must wait! Ladies, au revoir! [*Exit, r. door.*]

Mrs. W. Here's a pretty piece of business! Whiffles! Mr. Whiffles!

WHIFFLES appears at L. D., with a carpet broom.

Whif. Is he gone?

Mrs. W. Yes.

Whif. That's lucky.

Mrs. W. No, it isn't; for he's only gone to tell his rascal he shan't want the carriage to-day, and say a few words to Guzzly —

Whif. Who's Guzzly?

Lydia. The Marquis of Guzzleton, papa — a friend of Mr. Brownjohn's, papa.

Mrs. W. And what do you think he's going to do next?

Whif. I haven't an idea.

Mrs. W. Why, he's coming back to dine with us. Lud a mercy! I shouldn't wonder if he brought Guzzly with him.

Whif. Dine with us? Pooh! it can't be — it mustn't be! Didn't you say so?

Mrs. W. I tried, but I couldn't; he wouldn't let me get a word in edgeways.

Whif. Then all I can say is, he'll get no dinner here, or Guzzly either. The larder's a desert.

Lydia. Lor, papa, how can you say so? I'm sure there's a very nice piece of cold roast beef.

Whif. So there is — baked last Sunday. Let me see. We can have it hashed, boiled, stewed, and cold — that'll be four dishes.

Mrs. W. Pooh! Mr. Brownjohn expects soup. By the by, I could manage a little soup — fish, game —

Lydia. Hot-house grapes, iced champagne, and Madeira.

Whif. Does he? I wish he may get 'em. If he had put his visit off till next week, we might have managed; I should have received my quarter's pension; but now, in the pre-ent state of our finances, one such meal as you talk about, and I go into the Gazette.

Mrs. W. Then what's to be done? Toby, let's set the kitchen chimney on fire.

Whif. A very good plan, only we should have to pay for putting it out again. No, no; I have it! a capital idea! Let's all go to bed, and have leeches on — won't that do?

Mrs. W. Then all I can say is, when Mr. Brownjohn comes, exposure must follow, for he'll immediately find us out, depend upon it.

PHIBBS enters at R. H. D., with a large rush basket under his arm.

Phibbs. Will he? Then he's in luck, whoever he is.

Mrs. W. Eh? No — yes — Cousin Phibbs!

Whif. Phibbs, from Winchester?

Lydia. My dear godpapa! (*all three run to him, and bring him forward.*)

Phibbs. Will the Whiffles family allow me to finish what I was saying? I was saying, as I came in — I mean, you were saying, as I came in, "He'll immediately find you out;" to which I replied, "Then he's in luck, whoever he is," for I've been endeavoring to accomplish that feat for the last two hours. I suppose I've knocked at least at forty doors — thirty-five of which, on the most moderate calculation, were slammed in my face — in short, if I had not luckily fallen in with a communicative milkman at the corner of the street, I should have given you up.

Mrs. W. (*aside to WHIFFLES.*) Toby, we must get rid of this vulgar relation of ours!

Whif. (*aside.*) Leave that to me. (*aloud — crosses to PHIBBS, R. C.*) My dear friend Phibbs, we're delighted to see you: and, to prove it, of course, now you are in London, you'll stop with us — that is, when I say stop with us, I don't exactly mean stop with us.

Phibbs. Well, that's lucky, because I shouldn't if you did. You're a pleasant fellow enough, Whiffles, but a little of you goes a good way. You can't flatter yourself for one moment that I've come all the way from Winchester for the pleasure of your society?

Whif. Then what has brought you?

Phibbs. Two things — important business, and the Great Western Railway.

Mrs. W. But, cousin Phibbs, how can you neglect your own business? By the by, what *is* your business?

Phibbs. There you puzzle me, for I can't exactly tell you.

Whif. What! don't you know what you are?

Phibbs. Oh, yes, I know what I am — of course I do. Nevertheless, although I've been what I am for a considerable period, I've never once been distinctly able to say what I am. In short, to be candid with you, I can't pronounce the word! However, to oblige you, I don't mind trying once more. You must know, then, that I'm a Veterinary — a Veteri-inny — a Vet — it's no use! But I attend to the bodily infirmities of quadrupeds in general, and of horses in particular.

Whif. Oh, a veterinary surgeon!

Phibbs. How do you do it? I can't manage it! I can get with perfect safety as far as the Vet — but when I attempt to go beyond it, I never know exactly where I am; so now I've taken to call myself a *veteran* surgeon. It's much easier, and sounds just as well, if not better!

Whif. (*aside to MRS. WHIFFLES.*) Do you see that basket under Phibbs' arm? I don't dare to allow myself to hope, but it may be a turkey, or a brace of pheasants, or —

Mrs. W. Or even a sucking pig! Oh, Toby, if it should be, what an escape for us!

Whif. I say, Phibbs, my boy, what have you got there?

Phibbs. Why, Whiffles, my boy, I flatter myself you'll say it's rather a superior haunch of venison.

Whif. I thought as much! Oh, what a thing it is to have a Phibbs! Generous, considerate creature! (*about to take the basket.*)

Phibbs. Holloa! holloa!

Whif. Give it to me! I can't, I won't allow you to hold it any longer — the sight distresses me; so give it to me, I say! (*pulling at basket.*)

Phibbs. Will you keep your hands off? I tell you, Whiffles, you are laboring under a slight mistake.

Whif. And so are you, Phibbs, under a very considerable mistake, if you imagine, for one moment, that I'll allow you to take your dinner at a chop-house, when you can stop and help us to eat our venison! No, no, never — no, never shall it be said that Whiffles so violated the rights of hospitality! — so, as I said before, give it to me! (*WHIFFLES attempts to take the basket, which PHIBBS places behind him. WHIFFLES lays hold of PHIBBS by the arms, and turns him to L. H. MRS. WHIFFLES takes basket out of PHIBBS' hand — WHIFFLES pushes PHIBBS to his former situation.*)

Phibbs. (*very quietly.*) Whiffles, do you particularly wish me to pitch into you? I tell you that haunch of venison is not for you!

Whif. Go along!

Phibbs. So I will, but not without my haunch. I don't know whether such is the fact, but at this moment indignation ought to be imprinted in its liveliest colors upon every feature of my countenance. Restore that venison, sir! or, forgetting the ties of consanguinity that unite us, I shall instantly hand you over to a policeman, with full instructions to introduce you, without loss of time, to the nearest magistrate.

Whif. Well, sir, if it must be so, be it so. I say, sir, if so it be, so be it. (*takes out his handkerchief.*) The blow is severe — very severe — for I did think I had one friend in the world, and that friend was Phibbs; but now that I have lost him, what have I to live for?

Nothing. That being the case, I'll instantly adjourn to the front attic, and precipitate myself into the street.

Phibbs. (seizing his arm.) Don't be a fool, sir — I say, sir, don't be a fool. (*soothingly.*) I'm distressed at your disappointment, Whiffles, but when I tell you that the contents of that basket were intended as a present to a gentleman of considerable influence in the metropolis, through whose instrumentality I hope to obtain the appointment of Vetitirinary — I mean, of Veterittiriny — I can't do it! — I mean the appointment of Surgeon to the South Hants Troop of Yeomanry — when I say the troop, of course I allude to the horses —

Whif. Oh, that alters the case. Let him have a haunch of venison too, by all means. And what's more, I'll tell you where to buy one.

Phibbs. Will you? Well, I really must say, that of all the cool proceedings —

Whif. Don't apologize, Phibbs — we don't mind your dropping in to dinner with us in this sort of way. Now, Jemima, take the basket, make up a roaring fire, and down with the venison immediately! Lydia, you'll help your mamma.

Lydia. Yes, papa.

Whif. Now, go along! Stop! (*aside to her.*) Jemima, you'd better run down to the crockery shop, and hire a dinner service — something handsome.

Mrs. W. Leave that to me, Toby — I'll do the thing in grand style, depend on't. [*Exit at L. H. D., with LYDIA.*]

Phibbs. Grand style! Now, why should you do the thing in grand style on my account?

Whif. It isn't on your account — we shouldn't care a straw about you. But there's a gentleman coming — I mean, another gentleman — a charming young man — I'm sure you'll like him.

Phibbs. And I'm sure I shan't! In the first place, I can't a-bear strangers; and in the next place, I confess it would not be at all gratifying to me to sit down to table with a person I never saw in the whole course of my life before, and of whom I know nothing whatever, and see him demolishing my venison!

Whif. But when I tell you he's a friend of mine, and one that may be of infinite service to me —

Phibbs. Well, then, I suppose it must be so.

Whif. That's kind of you, Phibbs — that's Phibbs all over. Now, make yourself comfortable here till I come back; or, if you prefer it, you can stroll into the park till dinner time — feed the ducks, or look at the nursery maids. (*nudging PHIBBS.*)

Phibbs. I've done that already, as I came here. (*nudging WHIFFLES.*)

Whif. Ha, ha, ha!

Phibbs. But I've business of more importance to attend to. Just look here, Whiffles. (*taking out pocket-book, and opening it.*) A bill at six months' date — (*shows paper*) — name regularly indorsed — came into my possession in the way of business, and, when I presented it, no one to take it up. And yet, I dare say, the fellow, whoever he is, calls himself a gentleman. However, I'll soon put the matter in the lawyer's hands; and if the gentleman don't take his bill up, I will *him*, or my name's not Phibbs.

Whif. Oh, any time will do for that — to-morrow, or the day after

—so, as I said before, make yourself comfortable here. (*going, returns.*) By the by, well remembered. You'll hardly believe it, Phibbs, but, on going into my wine cellar this morning, I found it empty.

Phibbs. Don't get any wine for me — I prefer porter.

Whif. Pooh! I wasn't thinking of you. But of course my friend will expect wine, so I'll run and order it. (*feeling in his pockets.*) Holloa! I've mislaid my purse. You don't happen to have any loose cash about you?

Phibbs. Nothing under a five pound note. (*showing it.*)

Whif. Thank ye. (*taking it.*) I know nothing gives you greater pleasure than to be of service to me, so don't say anything about it. Good by, Phibbs; and, as I said before, make yourself comfortable.

[*Exit, R. H. D.*]

Phibbs. Now, I dare say Whiffles thinks this capital fun; but people's notions of humor differ. I consider the entire proceeding, from first to last, as one stupendous nuisance. I've been plundered of my venison — that I don't care so much about, because I'll take good care to eat the greater part of it. But I can't buy another, I've lent Whiffles all the money I had about me, which it would be doing his well-established character an injustice to suppose I shall ever have about me again. However, as it can't be helped, I'll take his advice, and make myself as comfortable as I can. (*takes off his coat, which he puts on a chair.*)

Enter BROWNJOHN, R. H. D., in an elegant dinner dress, rather outre.

Brownj. I flatter myself this is rather the thing! The Whiffles family can't help feeling flattered; indeed, I'm not sure they ought not all to go into fits the moment they see me. (*seeing PHIBBS.*) Holloa! Who's this equivocal individual?

Phibbs. (*seeing him.*) Who's this youthful stranger?

Brownj. (*aside.*) One of Whiffles' grooms, I suppose. How are you? (*nodding at PHIBBS.*)

Phibbs. (*nodding at BROWNJOHN.*) Pretty well, thank you. How are you?

Brownj. Where's the worthy Whiffles?

Enter WHIFFLES, R. H. D., with basket of wine; crosses at back of stage, unobserved, and exit at L. H. D.

Phibbs. Just stepped out to get some wine.

Brownj. Oh, gone down to the cellar, eh?

Phibbs. Not much use his going there — the cellar's empty.

Brownj. Empty? (*aside.*) Holloa! out of wine? That looks queer. (*aloud.*) No wine in the house? Go along — you must be mistaken.

Phibbs. Not I. I've just lent him the money to buy some.

Brownj. (*aside.*) What's that? Out of money? Quererer still! (*sniffing.*) Holloa! Delicious odor! Smells like venison!

Phibbs. Very odd if it didn't. It *is* venison!

Brownj. Well, now, this is handsome of Whiffles — very handsome indeed! I confess his venison astonishes me — so the least I can do in return will be to astonish his venison.

Phibbs. His venison? My venison!

Brownj. Your venison?

Phibbs. Yes — I've just brought it. (*retires at back.*)

Brownj. You? (*aside.*) Dear me! I don't exactly know what to think of Whiffles after all! No wine of his own — no money of his own — and another man's venison! Perhaps he's *not* so well off, after all! I almost wish I hadn't come!

Enter WHIFFLES, in dinner costume, L. H. D.

Whif. (*to BROWNJOHN.*) Ah! delighted to see you, my dear sir. (*shaking BROWNJOHN's hand, who bows stiffly.*) The ladies will be here immediately. You can eat venison, I hope? Ha, ha! I'll be bound, now, you think I've been guilty of an extravagance.

Brownj. No, 'pon my soul, I don't.

Whif. And as for wine — if you like a good glass of wine, cgad I can give you one that I had — let me see — how long has it been in my cellar?

Brownj. About three minutes and a half, I should think!

Whif. (*aside.*) The devil! That villain, Phibbs, has been blabbing! Oh — what — you've heard —

Brownj. (*coldly.*) A trifle or two concerning you, Mr. Whiffles, from that gentleman; and, as it seems I'm to drink *his* wine and eat *his* venison, I think the sooner you introduce me to him the better.

Whif. Oh — ah — yes! He certainly did bring the venison. He never comes to me without bringing something or other. In fact, he considers it his duty.

Brownj. His duty! Oh, I see — he's one of your people.

Whif. One of my people?

Brownj. I mean, one of your servants. That's John, the footman!

Whif. No, not exactly a footman — a kind of bailiff.

Brownj. (*starting.*) The devil!

Whif. I mean, a sort of steward.

Brownj. Oh, now I understand it all. The venison came from Whiffles Park!

Whif. Ex — act — ly!

Brownj. And having mislaid the key of your wine cellar, and not having your check-book about you, you very naturally made your steward fork out! The very plan I adopt with my head butler. (*aside.*) I'm very glad I *did* come! (*retires up stage, L. H.*)

Phibbs. (*L. H.*) I say, Whiffles, who have you got there?

Whif. Who? why — (*aside.*) I have it! (*aloud.*) A person of importance, Phibbs — and one, by-the-by, you ought to be well acquainted with. He's the youthful, but talented President of the Veterinary College.

Phibbs. No! the very gentleman I intended my haunch of venison for! This is fortunate! (*bows repeatedly to BROWNJOHN.*) Your most obedient, sir — once more, sir, your most obedient, sir! (*retires up.*)

Brownj. Thank ye. (*aside to WHIFFLES.*) A civil sort of a fellow enough.

Whif. Rather odd in his manner — but you mustn't mind his eccentricity. We do not look upon him in the light of a servant — he has been so long in the family. His uncle Joshua married the second cousin of my nurse Deborah's youngest brother — so you see —

Brownj. Exactly.

Phibbs. I hope, sir — I devoutly hope, sir, it will meet with your approbation.

Brownj. It! what?

Phibbs. The venison, sir. I chose it on purpose for you.

Whif. (aside to BROWNJOHN, quickly.) Yes, I told him you were coming to dine with me!

Phibbs. (bows to BROWNJOHN.) And if — I say *if* — I should be so fortunate as to obtain the situation that I —

Brownj. Situation! What, don't you like your place?

Phibbs. (bothered.) Place? oh — yes —

Brownj. Very well, then —

Whif. Very well, then — (*takes BROWNJOHN hastily by the arm, and leads him away.*)

Phibbs. "Very well, then!" What can they possibly mean by "very well, then?"

Enter MRS. WHIFFLES with a tray, on which is a table-cloth and a pile of plates, L. door.

Mrs. W. Now, Toby, help me lay the cloth. (*sees BROWNJOHN.*) Oh lud! (*suddenly turning her back towards BROWNJOHN.*)

Whif. Mrs. Whiffles! Mrs. Whiffles! I'm really surprised at you, after all I've said on the subject. (*to BROWNJOHN.*) It's a most extraordinary thing, sir, but Mrs. Whiffles will always insist upon laying the cloth herself.

Brownj. Well, as you say, it is rather odd! (*aside.*) Strange people these Whiffleses!

Whif. This is the consequence of sending all the servants out!

Brownj. No, not *all*. There's What's-his-name, there! (*points to PHIBBS.*) By-the-by, what is his name?

Whif. Oh — Phibbs!

Brownj. I mean his Christian name?

Whif. Pygmalion!

Brownj. But you don't call him Pygmalion?

Whif. Yes we do.

Brownj. Then you shouldn't. Pygmalion is such a mouthful! You should abbreviate him — curtail him — cut him down!

Whif. Cut him down?

Brownj. Don't you know what I mean? I'll show you. (*to PHIBBS.*) Here, Piggy!

Phibbs. (delighted — aside.) The President calls me Piggy! What condescending familiarity! (*he advances quickly to BROWNJOHN.*) Sir, I —

Brownj. Lay the cloth!

Phibbs. (astonished.) Eh?

Brownj. (imitating.) Eh? Don't you hear?

Phibbs. Yes, I —

Brownj. Then why the deuce don't you do it? Come, Piggy, look sharp! (*retires and speaks to MRS. WHIFFLES.*)

Phibbs. "Look sharp!" "Lay the cloth!"

Whif. (aside to him.) Of course. Don't you see everybody is doing something except you? Even the President himself — he's assisting.

Phibbs. Well, but — damn it — “Lay the cloth” — “Look sharp!”
Whif. He’s so accustomed to speak in a tone of authority. Besides, if he sees you idling about, he’ll form an unfavorable opinion of you.
Phibbs. So he will. (*aloud.*) Well, I don’t mind laying the cloth!
Brownj. Don’t you, indeed? Well said, Piggy! Ha, ha! Now then — stir your stumps! (*speaks to Mrs. Whiffles again.*)
Phibbs. Stir my stumps! Now ‘pon my life —
Whif. (*aside to PHIBBS.*) It’s only his way!
Phibbs. But I don’t like his way. I object to his “look sharps,” and “stir your stumps!”
Whif. You’d better tell him so. Quarrel with him at once — annihilate your prospects —
Phibbs. No, I won’t do that. (*aloud.*) Now, then, where are the knives and forks?
Brownj. Well, Piggy, I must say, you are the coolest fellow. I presume you cleaned them, and put them away, sir.
Phibbs. Me? Oh, confound it, I —
Whif. Hush — go along! You’ll find everything in the sideboard drawer. (*pushes PHIBBS towards sideboard.*)
Brownj. Now, do move your pegs! (*gives PHIBBS another push, who goes in disgust, and drags the drawer of the sideboard open violently.*)

Enter LYDIA, L. H. D.

Lydia. Shall I take up the soup now, mamma — or wait till Mr. — (*seeing BROWNJOHN.*) Oh dear!
Whif. You take up the soup?
Brownj. (*aside.*) She take up the soup?
Whif. What, isn’t that cook come in? Then I’ll send that cook about her business! Confound the servants, I say! I’ll pack them all off, every one of them!
Brownj. I should certainly give that fellow, Piggy, warning. Just look at him.
(points to PHIBBS, who, during the above, has taken the knives and forks out of sideboard drawer, and has flung them on table. When BROWNJOHN points to him, he is throwing a knife and fork across the table for each person — BROWNJOHN goes to him, pushes him aside, then lays a knife and fork properly.)
Brownj. (*points to what he has done.*) That’s the way, stupid. (*comes forward again.*)
Phibbs. Stupid! Now, really, the president’s getting quite personal!
Whif. Now, then, for dinner. I hope, Mrs. Whiffles, this will be a lesson to you, never to send all the servants out of the house again.
Brownj. But, my dear fellow, they’re not all out. There’s Piggy! Now, Piggy, have you done?
Phibbs. Oh, yes! (*throws plates for each person round the table.*)
Brownj. Then come here!
Phibbs. (*comes forward — sulkily.*) Well?
Brownj. (*imitating.*) Well? (*aside to WHIFFLES.*) How you can possibly put up with this sort of thing, I can’t imagine.
Whif. Why — he’s been so long in the family. His uncle Joshua

married the second cousin of my old nurse Deborah's youngest brother, and so — you understand —

Brownj. Can't say I do. Never mind. (*to PHIBBS.*) Bring in the soup! Allow me — (*offers his arm to MRS. WHIFFLES and LYDIA, and takes them to table.*)

Phibbs. Bring in the soup! Me? Oh, pooh! Really, I can't —

Whif. Go along, Phibbs — never mind — and in the meantime, I'll talk to him about you.

Phibbs. Do — and just give him a hint that it isn't quite the thing in a president to stir people's stumps, nor even to move their pegs!

Whif. Very well — now, go along — (*pushes PHIBBS towards the door.*) Stop — here! (*flings napkin over PHIBBS' arm.*) That's better now go along! [*Exit PHIBBS, L. H. D.*]

Brownj. Ah, Whiffles, you are indeed a happy man! not on the score of fortune — for I know, by experience, that wealth doesn't constitute happiness — but, with such an amiable wife —

Mrs. W. Oh, sir!

Brownj. Such a lovely, fascinating daughter —

Lydia. Oh, sir!

Whif. Yes, Lydia is indeed a treasure. Oh, what a wife she will make!

Brownj. (*suddenly grasping WHIFFLES' hand.*) Whiffles — feelings are not to be controlled! I would if I could, but if I can't, why should I? In other words, then, I —

Phibbs. (*without, L. D.*) Now then! — open the door! (*kicking at it.*)

Brownj. (*aside.*) Damn that Piggy! (*BROWNJOHN, MRS. WHIFFLES, and LYDIA, seat themselves at table, while WHIFFLES opens the door.*)

Phibbs. (*as he enters with soup tureen.*) Here you have it — hot, hot, hot — all hot — all hot!

Brownj. Hark at him!

Phibbs. Where shall I put it?

Brownj. Why, you wouldn't put it on the floor! (*PHIBBS places tureen on table, then wipes his hands with the napkin that is on his arm, and throws it on table — BROWNJOHN takes it up, and flings it at him.*) Heyday! the table's laid for five! (*sees PHIBBS drawing chair to table for himself.*) What's he at now? (*gets up, and snatches away chair from PHIBBS.*) I'm astonished at you. (*seats himself again.*)

Phibbs. Holloa! come, I say —

Whif. (*rises — aside to PHIBBS.*) Don't you see — there isn't room enough, and we shall be crowded — so, my dear Phibbs, you shall have the little side table *all* to yourself — there!

Phibbs. Little side table! Me?

Whif. It's the seat of honor. I offered it to him, but he, in the most handsome manner, resigned it in your favor — so sit down. (*pushing PHIBBS into chair, and returning to his seat.*)

Phibbs. That president and I shall have a row presently — I'm sure we shall!

Brownj. Heyday! there's no bread on the table.

Mrs. W. } (*about to rise.*) I beg pardon —

& *Lydia.* } (*calling.*) Here, Piggy!

Phibbs. (*sulkily.*) Well?

Brownj. Well? Hand the bread!

Whif. (turning his head round to PHIBBS.) Do, there's a good fellow! (PHIBBS, disgusted, takes bread tray, and puts it down in centre of table — takes several pieces for himself, and goes back to his seat.)

Brownj. (watching him.) Well, if ever — Ladies, a little soup? Piggy!

Phibbs. What's the matter now!

Brownj. (to WHIFFLES.) Well, how you can possibly stand this sort of thing —

Whif. Why, as I said before, his uncle, Joshua, married my old — Mrs. W. Yes, if his uncle Joshua hadn't married our old —

Brownj. Exactly! Now, Piggy, don't you hear — the ladies will take some soup.

Phibbs. Well, I don't prevent them.

Brownj. Come, then, sir —

Whif. (turning his head round to PHIBBS.) Do, there's a good fellow!

Phibbs. (taking hold of tureen cover, and suddenly dropping it.) Why didn't you tell me it was hot? (taking hold of MRS. WHIFFLES' plate with his coat tail, and holding it out to BROWNJOHN, who helps soup.)

Brownj. (looking at PHIBBS.) 'Pon my life he's a character. (helps soup round, and beginning to take some, PHIBBS walks up to table again, with a plate in his hand, which he holds between LYDIA and BROWNJOHN.) Well, who's this for?

Phibbs. Who? Why, for me!

Brownj. You? (looks across inquiringly at WHIFFLES, who nods in the affirmative.) Oh, very well. (helps PHIBBS.)

Phibbs. A little more. Thank ye. (takes his plate back to the little table, and seats himself.)

Brownj. Ha, ha! (to WHIFFLES.) You certainly have peculiar notions about servants.

Whif. Why, how now, Lydia? what's the matter with you? You don't eat anything.

Brownj. (aside.) That's a favorable symptom. (aloud.) Like your anxious father, I have also remarked that interesting fact — you don't eat anything.

Lydia. Oh, yes — I — do.

Phibbs. No, you don't! Perhaps you don't like the soup. I don't much wonder at it.

Brownj. He actually joins in the conversation!

Phibbs. (getting up — to WHIFFLES.) You ought to take her into the country — a little fresh air would do her a world of good. (leaning over across WHIFFLES, and holding out a plate to BROWNJOHN.) I'll trouble you for a little more soup — and just give it a good stir first.

Brownj. Oh, this is intolerable — unbearable! (getting up, and walking about.)

Phibbs. (aside.) Good gracious! I've offended the president. (following BROWNJOHN, plate in hand.) Really, my dear sir — upon my honor, I didn't mean —

Whif. (to BROWNJOHN, aside.) Don't be annoyed with the poor fellow — you hear — he didn't mean — (aside to PHIBBS.) Sit down, do! (pushing PHIBBS towards table, who sits down in BROWNJOHN's chair, and begins to help himself to soup.)

Brownj. Look at him! Come out of that! (*taking PHIBBS by the collar, and twirling him round, seats himself.*)

Phibbs. (*aside, and shaking the soup ladle, which he has in his hand.*) That president has reason to congratulate himself that he is a president — else with this selfsame weapon which I now convulsively grasp, would I —

Whif. (*aside to him.*) Now sit down, there's a good fellow!

Brownj. (*to PHIBBS, as he is going towards the table.*) Stop, sir! clear away, first.

Phibbs. Clear away? Me? Oh, damn it! (*dashes the ladle down on the little table, and breaks it.*)

Brownj. Bravo! Go it, Piggy! There goes eighteen pence out of your wages!

Phibbs. Wages?

Whif. (*very quickly.*) Ha, ha, ha! (*to PHIBBS.*) Don't you see the fun? Ladle — wages — wages — ladle — ha, ha! You'd better laugh, or he'll think you don't see it.

Phibbs. (*solemnly.*) Ha, ha, ha! (*aside.*) I don't see it a bit — never mind. (*aloud.*) Capital! ha, ha! You'll be the death of me, you funny man, you! — (*to BROWNJOHN.*) — Ha, ha!

Brownj. Funny man? (*to WHIFFLES.*) Mr. Whiffles, you really must excuse me, but —

Whif. Well, perhaps a change of scene would do Lydia good — so what say you to a trip to Italy in the spring, eh?

Mrs. W. Or Switzerland — I pant for Switzerland! (*imitating the "Ya-ou-ou!" in Swiss songs.*)

Phibbs. Well, for my part, I mean to go to Gravesend — I've heard so much of the shrimps there.

Brownj. I presume, sir, you'll go wherever you're ordered.

Phibbs. Ordered? (*bell rings, followed by a cry of "Milk!"*)

Brownj. (*to MRS. WHIFFLES, who jumps up.*) Don't disturb yourself, my dear madam. (*to PHIBBS.*) Piggy.

Phibbs. Well?

Brownj. Well! don't you hear the bell, sir? Go and take in the milk.

Phibbs. Milk! Me?

Whif. (*aside to PHIBBS quickly.*) Ha, ha! Another joke. "Hear bell" — "Take in milk." Don't you see? *Do, there's a good fellow!* (*PHIBBS rises sulkily.*)

Mrs. W. You'll find a jug on the sideboard, Pygmalion.

Brownj. You'll find a jug in the sideboard, Piggy, don't you hear?

Phibbs. (*shouting.*) I hear! (*crossing slowly, and in a dignified manner, to sideboard — opens it, and takes out a very large blue and white washing jug.*)

Mrs. W. Not that — the little jug.

Brownj. The little jug.

Phibbs. (*after darting an indignant glance at BROWNJOHN, takes out a little milk jug, and goes towards R. H. D. — stops.*) How much? (*sulkily.*)

Mrs. W. } Pshaw! Go along!

& *Whif.* }

Brownj. Be off!

(*PHIBBS, after another indignant look, goes out at R. H. D.*)

Whif. Oh, the plague of servants! This sort of thing must be rather new to you, Mr. Brownjohn — but you mustn't blame me, for, as I said before, if Mrs. Whiffles will insist upon sending all the servants out of the house —

Mrs. W. We must give the creatures a holiday sometimes.

PHIBBS appears again at door, R. H.

Phibbs. The man with the milk presents his respectful compliments, and says he'll be damned if he chawks you up any more.

Brownj. Then pay the man, and have done with it. Go along! (*WHIFFLES shuts the door in PHIBBS' face.*)

Whif. (bothered.) These little paltry trifles will escape one's memory, Mr. Brownjohn.

Brownj. Exactly. (*rises from table, and comes down L. H., aside.*) "Chalk up!" Sounds very suspicious! I have my milk chalked up, but then I'm not well off — perhaps Whiffles isn't. I'll take short odds he's a humbug after all — and yet, I don't know how it is, the daughter is such a charming little creature, that hang me if I don't feel as if I could marry her without a penny! (*looking at LYDIA — then seats himself.*)

Lydia. (aside.) I'm sure he's a very nice young man! (*meeting BROWNJOHN'S eyes, and turning away.*)

Whif. (aside to MRS. WHIFFLES.) Did you observe that? We'll leave them together. (*aloud.*) Come, Mrs. Whiffles, as you have so ingeniously got rid of the servants, why, egad, we must do their work ourselves. Luckily, we're used to it. (*MRS. WHIFFLES pinches him.*) No, I don't mean that, of course. Ha, ha, ha! Now, then, to clear the table! (*taking up the plates.*)

Mrs. W. (aside to WHIFFLES, with the tureen in her hand.) Run round the corner, Toby, and get a sixpenny pot of currant jelly! If he doesn't pop the question soon, the venison will be spoilt.

(*WHIFFLES crosses stage, and exit at R. H. D., MRS. WHIFFLES at L. H. D.*)

Lydia. Dear me! I wish papa and mamma hadn't left me alone with him. (*aloud.*) You'll excuse me — (*about to retire.*)

Brownj. Indeed I'll do no such a thing. (*taking her hand.*) What nice soft little fingers! (*aloud.*) Don't take your hand away.

Lydia. I wasn't going!

Brownj. (aside.) Sweet innocence! (*aloud.*) Then you are not afraid of me?

Lydia. No.

Brownj. Then why do you wish to leave me?

Lydia. Because — because —

Brownj. You'd rather be elsewhere?

Lydia. No.

Brownj. Now I perfectly understand. You wish to go, because you'd rather be here. (*aside.*) What a sweet creature to wander through Whiffles Park with! I wonder if there is a Whiffles Park. Sometimes I'm inclined to think there's not a Whiffles Park. Yet, if there is not a Whiffles Park, why should Whiffles talk about Whiffles Park? (*aloud.*) Miss Whiffles, doubtless, delights in the gayeties of the metropolis?

Lydia. We never enter into them. But papa has promised to take me to Astley's. I do so dote upon Astley's!

Brownj. (aside.) Partial to horses — a sympathy with the brute creation. I like that — I admire that! *(aloud.)* But wouldn't you infinitely prefer a stroll through your favorite park?

Lydia. I go there very often — every other day at least.

Brownj. Every other day?

Lydia. I go there on purpose to feed the dear little ducks.

Brownj. (aside.) Goes all the way to Whiffles Park to feed her dear little ducks. Considerate creature! *(aloud.)* Ah! happy ducks! Miss Whiffles — Miss Lydia — Lydia — Lydia, dear! there's no controlling one's fate; there's no contending with one's destiny: we were made, created, moulded, formed for one another. I see it — so do you; I feel it — so do you; and thus let me — *(about to kiss her.)*

Lydia. Oh, sir!

Brownj. Won't you grant me *one* salute? A little one — a very little one?

Lydia. Oh, no.

Brownj. And if not — why not?

Lydia. Because — because —

Brownj. You'd rather kiss somebody else?

Lydia. No — o —

Brownj. Perhaps you had rather I kissed somebody else?

Lydia. (very quickly.) Oh, no. *(turning her face to BROWNJOHN, who kisses her.)*

Enter PHIBBS, R. H. D.

Phibbs. (seeing BROWNJOHN.) Holloa! holloa!

Brownj. The devil! *(goes to PHIBBS, and brings him down to one side — then aside to him.)* Piggy! mum — not a word! You understand? There's half a crown for you. *(giving half a crown.)* Now be off. *(pushing him.)*

Phibbs. (astonished.) Half a crown!

Brownj. Isn't it enough? Then give it me back again, and I'll owe you five shillings. *(taking it.)* Now go!

Phibbs. Pooh! pooh!

Brownj. Won't that do? Then I'll tell you what, Piggy; when I'm married, I'll take you into my service, and double your wages. There — now be off.

Phibbs. (quietly buttoning up his coat.) Wages again! I say, just listen to me, young chap.

Brownj. Young chap! *(seizing PHIBBS by the collar.)* Hark ye, sirrah! if you were my servant, damme, I'd kick you out of the house.

Enter WHIFFLES, R. H. D. — crosses stealthily at back towards L. H.

Phibbs. Kick!

Brownj. (shouting.) Hold your tongue! But, as it is, I'll get your master to do it.

Phibbs. My master?

Brownj. Mr. Whiffles.

Phibbs. Whiffles, my master? Who said so?

Brownj. Who said so?

Phibbs. Who said so.

Brownj. He said so.

Phibbs. He said so! ha, ha, ha! (*suddenly stops short, then runs at full speed towards L. H., and immediately lays hold of WHIFFLES, dragging him by the coat tail.* *Mrs. WHIFFLES enters from L. H. D. PHIBBS turns WHIFFLES round, facing him, then folds his arms, and examines him from head to foot.*) I say, sir — so, sir! I am your servant, am I?

Whif. Why —

Brownj. Of course he is. (*to WHIFFLES.*) Of course you are. (*to PHIBBS.*) You, perhaps, may have rather better wages than Nancy, or Patty, or Peggy, or John the footman, or even the coachman — but you're a servant for all that. And let me tell you, Piggy, it isn't because your uncle Joshua happened to marry old Deborah's —

Phibbs. Pooh! Don't Joshua and Deborah me. (*shouting to WHIFFLES.*) Am I your servant — am I, sir?

Whif. (*bothered.*) No, sir!

Phibbs. (*to BROWNJOHN.*) There!

Whif. (*in a dignified manner.*) No, sir, you are not — I discharge you.

Mrs. W. We discharge you.

Brownj. We discharge you — don't you hear? There's the door — go!

Phibbs. Go? I will! Family of the Whiffles, individually and collectively, I renounce you! (*going.*)

Lydia. (*running to him.*) No, not me. I don't know what papa and mamma's object may be, but they shall never, never prevail on me to behave ingrately to my dear, good, kind godpapa.

Brownj. Godpapa!

Phibbs. Yes, sir. Pygmalion Phibbs, of Winchester, Vetetininrinny — Verri'niritty — Vet —

Lydia. Veterinary Surgeon.

Phibbs. Yes, sir, Vetterininrinny — I *can't* do it. (*to WHIFFLES, fierce'y.*) You — you to call me your servant? You — a paltry superannuated exciseman! — you, who have cooked your own victuals all your life — when you happened to have any victuals to cook.

Brownj. (*aside.*) An exciseman! I've been done!

Phibbs. I see it all! The forcible abstraction of my venison is accounted for. You wanted to humbug the President by persuading the President that you were well off, in order that the President might marry your daughter!

Brownj. President! And who the deuce is the President?

Phibbs. Why, you — youthful but talented being — you!

Brownj. Me a President!

Phibbs. Yes, of the Vetetinni — the Verriterinni — bother the word!

Brownj. Ha, ha, ha! Capital!

Phibbs. Why, you don't mean to say that I've been humbugged by him as well as you? (*to WHIFFLES.*) Atrocious impostor! (*to BROWNJOHN.*) Sir, you've insulted me slightly — I might say, grossly — but I don't blame you. I rather like you. (*takes BROWNJOHN'S arm under*

his.) I like you much. (*presses his hand, then crosses to LYDIA.*) Come along, Lydia. (*puts her arm under his.*) And now we'll all three of us go and dine somewhere else. We'll take the haunch of venison with us, and leave that wretched pair to their still more wretched soup. (*going.*)

Whif. Stop! Come, cousin Pygmalion — forget and forgive.

Phibbs. Whiffles, I can't say that I'll forgive you, but I pledge you my word of honor that I'll forget you. Come — (*going.*)

Brownj. Stay! Mr. Whiffles — Mrs. Whiffles, permit me candidly and honestly to inform you, that you have been playing your cards to very little purpose. Fortunately for you, the game was not finished; for, had you won, you would soon have discovered that I was not worth playing for.

Whif. Ah, I understand, sir. That means, that Lydia Whiffles with a fortune, and Lydia Whiffles without a fortune —

Brownj. Are, to me, precisely one and the same person. She may have no money, but she has amiability and industry — the best dowry a wife can bring her husband. (*kisses LYDIA's hand.*)

Whif. Husband! (*seizes BROWNJOHN's hand.*) You consent to take her without a fortune! Generous, magnanimous Brownjohn!

Phibbs. Brownjohn! John Brownjohn?

Brownj. At your service, my very dear sir.

Phibbs. Very well. (*takes out a pocket-book, and presents a paper to BROWNJOHN.*) Then, my very dear sir, I'll trouble you to take up this little bill of yours.

Brownj. (*gives a long whistle.*) The devil!

Whif. Holloa! Why, surely, you're not the —

Brownj. Yes, I'm very much afraid I am the —

Whif. But I suppose you will pay it?

Brownj. If you've any doubt on the subject, lend me the money, and you'll see if I won't.

Mrs. W. Mercy on us! Then the few spare thousands you spoke of as about to invest —

Whif. The very day you knocked me into the kennel in Fleet Street —

Brownj. Were laid out in a mortgage on the great Moonshine estate. Ha, ha!

Whif. And where's the great Moonshine estate?

Brownj. In the immediate neighborhood of Whiffles Park. Ha, ha, ha!

Whif. Then I've done!

Brownj. Yes, Whiffles — it's a clear case of "done on both sides."

Whif. Zounds! Then I'm marrying my daughter to a beggar, after all!

Phibbs. A beggar! Ha, ha! Bravo, Whiffles! Now, Whiffles, it's my turn. Instead of being your servant, I'll show you I'm your master. I say, he shall marry her!

Whif. I say, he shan't!

Phibbs. I say, he shall! As for this bit of paper — there! (*tears up bill.*)

Brownj. (*to Phibbs.*) Now, don't forget I've paid you!

Phibbs. (*to WHIFFLES.*) He shan't marry her, shan't he? He

hasn't got any money, hasn't he? (*to BROWNJOHN.*) How much do you want? One thousand — two thousand — three thousand —

Brownj. Say five, and have done with it!

Phibbs. (*bullying WHIFFLES.*) I'll leave him all my money when I die, and then I'll set him up in business. (*to BROWNJOHN.*) What'll you be? A grocer? cheesemonger? ironmonger? any other monger? I have it! I'll retire from business, and set you up as a Vetitirinary — a Vettittinirry — a Veterinary Surgeon! I've said it at last!

Whif. Phibbs, you have conquered! Mr. Brownjohn, Lydia is yours!

Phibbs. That question's settled — so I vote that we immediately discuss the other. I mean the venison!

Brownj. Which, by this time, must be "done on both sides," too!

Phibbs. I'll bring it in!

Omnes. No, no, no — we really can't allow —

Phibbs. I tell you I will. I've been ordered about by everybody, and now I choose to order myself about. "Piggy, bring in the venison! don't you hear? Look sharp, and stir your stumps!" I'm ready for anything! (*to AUDIENCE.*) Can I do anything for *you*? Shall I bring in the venison now, or shall I bring it in to-morrow night? That will do very nicely. Then, with your permission, I'll not only bring it in to-morrow evening, but every evening until further notice.

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
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COSTUMES.

DUNDUCKETTY.— White trousers, fancy waistcoat. 1st coat, a light blue lounging jacket. 2d coat, a brown frock.

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SCENE.— MR. PETER DUNDUCKETTY'S LODGINGS.

TIME.— Present day.

DUNDUCKETTY'S PICNIC.

SCENE.—*A comfortably furnished Sitting Room—doors, R. and L. R., second wing, a window looking into the Street—at back, a fireplace, over which is a looking-glass—in front of fireplace, a footstool—L., a table with breakfast things, chairs, sofa, &c.—on one chair is a brown frock coat—on sofa is seen a light blue lounging coat.*

At the rising of the curtain Mrs. MUFFIT is discovered filling a hamper with provisions.

Mrs. M. Let me see, a bottle of sherry, a goblet, a corkscrew, a cold fowl, and a nice pigeon pie—just the thing for a picnic. Don't I wish I was going! (*knock heard at door, R.*) Come in!

Enter three street MUSICIANS, the first with a piccolo, the second with a violin, the third with a violoncello.

1st Musician. Please, marm, the gen'lman told us as how we was to be here by ten o'clock.

Mrs. M. Well, I never—what can my lodger want with a flute and fiddle? (*crossing to door, L. and knocking*) Mr. Dunducketty!

Dund. (*within*) Halloo!

Mrs. M. Please, sir, here's three musicians!

Dund. (*within*) It's all right, Mrs. Muffit, I'm coming.

Enter DUNDUCKETTY, L., carefully brushing his hair with two brushes—he is in his shirt sleeves, and wears a fancy waistcoat, white trousers, and a gold chain—(tremendous swell).

Oh, here you are.

1st Musician. Yes, your honor, we was obliged to take a cab, 'cos of our hinstuments.

Dund. Then just get inside again, will you, and keep there till I come down.

1st Musician. (*going*) Werry good, sir.

Dund. I say, you've been practising up those quadrilles I told you of?

1st Musician. Bless your heart, sir — knows 'em perfect.

Exeunt MUSICIANS.

Dund. That's right. Hamper packed, Mrs. Muffit?

Mrs. M. Yes, sir.

Dund. You haven't forgotten the knives and forks?

Mrs. M. Dear, no, sir!

Dund. Useful articles at a picnic, you know. *(gets on stool in front of fireplace and looks in glass, singing meanwhile, "Oh, the days when we went gipsying," &c.)* Please to hand me that cravat. Thank you. I see, Mrs. Muffit, I am fortunate in having a very attentive landlady.

Mrs. M. *(dropping a courtesy)* I'm sure, sir, I always do my best to make my lodgers comfortable. *(cautiously)* You'll excuse my asking the question, sir, but I — I presume, sir, I — I've let my lodgings to a single gentleman?

Dund. *(tying cravat.)* You have, Mrs. Muffit, a single gentleman — a remarkably single gentleman — without any incumbrances whatever. *(sings gayly)* Tra, la, la!

Mrs. M. A very pleasant thing too, sir.

Dund. Oh, you'd say that, Mrs. Muffit, if, like me, you'd been for the last ten years uncle to a little self-willed vixen of a niece, who hadn't any other relation in the whole world. *(gets off stool.)*

Mrs. M. *(not understanding)* Then you are no longer fier uncle, sir?

Dund. *(gayly)* No, Mrs. Muffit, not I! I consider that my duties as uncle terminated this day three weeks, when I transferred all responsibility as regards the young rebel to a remarkably nice young man — the young lady's husband — and won't he have a time of it; I wouldn't be in his shoes for something! *(altering his manner)* Just tell that washerwoman not to put so much starch in my cravats — it's like tying the kitchen poker!

Mrs. M. I will, sir.

Dund. *(surveying himself complacently in a glass)* Yes, Mrs. Muffit — this day three weeks my niece Letitia became Mrs. Charles Langton — a joyful day that, Mrs. Muffit! — the "Emanicipation of the Serfs" was a fool to it!

Mrs. M. Lor, sir!

Dund. *(making hims if an "aggravator")* A fool to it, I say, Mrs. Muffit! Never was unfortunate uncle so soundly badgered as I have been for the last ten years; but, thank goodness, I'm a free man at last — and don't I mean to make up for lost time, that's all. *(sings)* Tra, la, la! My coat, Mrs. Muffit.

Mrs. M. *(handing frock coat)* This one, sir?

Dund. No, indeed! a snuff-colored frock coat at a picnic! that would be unpicturesque. No, no! *(taking up light blue fancy lounging coat from chair and putting it on)* This is the style of garment for the buttercups and daisies — it is called the "Thirty-shilling Zephyr!" and a very neat article it is — so

juvenile and elastic! *This, too, I flatter myself, is about the correct thing in hats — (takes up a very knowing-looking low-crowned felt hat) — it's called the "truly rural."* I rather think that will settle the widow's business — so on with it and off for Bushy Park! (*lifting hamper*). But I can't ride to the station in the same vehicle with three itinerant musicians. Send for a cab, Mrs. Muffit.

Mrs. M. A cab, sir! why, it's only two minutes' walk to the station.

Dund. Never mind (*dancing*); I must save myself up for the quadrilles. A cab, I say, Mrs. Muffit!

Mrs. M. (*who has meanwhile taken tea-tray*) All right, sir! — directly, sir! *Exit running, R.*

Dund. I'm all impatience to be there. (*looking out of window*). Splendid weather — just the day for a picnic! Where's Badger's letter? (*finds it on table, R.*) Ah, here it is! (*reading*) "My dear old Bricksiwicksey," — (*speaking*) Bricksiwicksey — friendly dog (*reads*), — "having heard of the recent change in your domestic arrangements, I trust you will make one at our picnic, on Tuesday next — Scene: Bushy Park — Dramatis Personæ: four gentlemen and eleven ladies. Ah! you sly dog" — (*speaking*) he says I'm a sly dog — ha, ha! — and so I am. (*reads*) "There will be donkey races, dancing on the green, and other rustic recreations — including forfeits." (*speaking*) Forfeits — with the handsome widow — intoxicating idea! (*reading*) "Each member to provide his own provender. Don't forget you're to bring the musicians." (*speaking*) The musicians are all right. I always like to encourage native talent; so I've engaged three *British professors* connected with a Gravesend steamer! (*replaces letter on table*) I've made them practice the *Satanella Quadrilles*, because there's "The Power of Love" in them. It's the widow's favorite. Fascinating creature — there was no mistaking that last squeeze of the hand. I wouldn't have my niece, or her husband, know anything about this little conquest for worlds! What a knowing young card I am! (*at this moment the MUSICIANS outside strike up "The Power of Love" quadrille time*) Hallo! there's the native talent at it already. (*delighted*) That's it — the widow's favorite! (*begins dancing*) I've qualified myself for the occasion by taking six lessons on the "light fantastic" at a dancing academy. (*shouting*) Set to partners! *chassez croisez!*

Enter MRS. MUFFIT, R., while he is dancing.

Mrs. M. Cab's at the door, sir.

Dund. (*still dancing*) All right? Just advance to me, Mrs. Muffit!

Mrs. M. (*astounded*) La, sir!

Dund. (*dancing*) That's the style o' thing. How delightful it is to have no incumbrances! (*dances MRS. MUFFIT round and round*).

Mrs. M. (out of breath) But, please sir, there's a young man down stairs who wants to speak to you very pertickler.

Dund. (annoyed, still dancing) A young man! What young man?

Mrs. M. He says his name's Alfonso de Pentonville.

Dund. Bother Alfonso de Pentonville! Tell him I am not at home. (*continues dancing*) Hands across — ladies chain!

Enter PENTONVILLE, R., romantic make up — long hair, turn-down collar, moustache and pointed beard.

Pent. (suddenly appearing before DUNDUCKETTY, as he is executing a caper) I beg your pardon, sir — you are at home!

Dund. (stopping short) Sir — I have at this moment a hansom cab waiting for me at the door; and a man who has a hansom cab waiting for him at the door is *not* at home!

Pent. (majestically) The hansom cab will wait!

Dund. That may be, sir; but the eleven o'clock train will not. (*irritably*) Your business, sir?

Pent. (majestically at Mrs. MUFFIT) Dismiss this female.

Mrs. M. (going) Female, indeed! If I was a gentleman, I should be ashamed to —

Pent. (wildly, approaching Mrs. MUFFIT) Woman — begone!

Mrs. MUFFIT utters a slight shriek, and runs off in terror, R.

Dund. The fellow's mad! (*turning round, perceives PENTONVILLE, gloomily seated with his arms folded, in an arm-chair, L.*) Why, confound him, he's taken up his quarters here! Now, sir, what do you want with me?

Pent. (suddenly starting up) Mr. Dunducketty — you have blighted my existence — crushed my young hopes — dispelled love's young dream!

Dund. (starts) The devil I have!

Pent. I am naturally of a poetical and impulsive turn. On returning from the country, I hasten to your late residence; I eagerly inquire for you, and am informed that you have lately vacated that tenement in favor of your niece and (*tragically*) her husband!

Dund. I am perfectly aware of that, sir.

Pent. (tragically) Her husband, sir — the man upon whom you have conferred her! (*crosses and thrusts DUNDUCKETTY back*).

Dund. Not a bit of it, sir — the man upon whom *she* has conferred herself.

Pent. (gloomily) Are you aware, sir, that I have lately come in for considerable property — thirty acres and a windmill?

Dund. (going) I'm delighted to hear it. Good-morning.

Pent. (fiercely) I ask you what I am to do with this windmill now, sir?

Dund. Set it going as soon as possible. Good-morning!

Pent. (following him up) Inhuman barbarian! I had cher-

ished the fond hope that *that* windmill would one day have been your niece's! And now, when on the wings of love I fly, my hoped-for bride to claim, I learn that she's *another's*! — (*seizes chair, and dashes it violently against the ground*) another's!

Dund. Be quiet, sir; this is my landlady's furniture.

Pent. (*bitterly*) Man! talk not to me of furniture or landladies! I tell you — you have blighted my existence — crushed my young hopes — dispelled love's young dream! (*stamps violently.*)

Dund. (*angrily*) Well, I can't help it; don't bother me about love's young dream! I'm in a hurry, sir; go away. (*takes up hamper again.*)

Enter LETITIA, hastily, R., in a state of tremendous agitation.

Leti. Uncle — uncle — what do you think?

Dund. (*starting*) My niece! the devil!

Pent. *She* here — the destructress of my heart's peace! Ah! cruel fate. (*buries his face in his handkerchief.*)

Leti. Uncle, you're *not* going out — don't say you're going out.

Dund. (*aside*) Well, that's a good joke! (*hastily placing hamper behind him*) Yes — yes — I am, though; and a — a — on very particular business, too! (*walks backwards to a chair, on which he drops hamper — aside*) This is pleasant, just as I was about to start!

Leti. Ah, uncle! If you only knew what has happened! (*aside, calmly*) Why, there's that stupid Mr. Pentonville.

Dund. (*impatiently*) Happened! What — what *can* have happened?

Pent. (*tragically — stepping forward*) Unfeeling relative! Does not your heart *tell* you what has happened?

Dund. (*angrily*) I wish *your* heart, sir, would tell you to mind your own business! (*vexed*) Now, my dear child, what *is* the matter!

Pent. (*again stepping forward*) I'll tell you what's the matter, sir. Her husband is an unpoetical barbarian — an uncongenial soul!

Dund. (*aside*) If it wasn't for the China shop next door, I'd send this poetical gentleman whizzing out of the window!

Pent. I tell you once more, sir, that you've blighted my existence, crushed my young —

Dund. (*roaring*) Hold your young tongue, sir, and take yourself and your young hopes elsewhere.

Pent. I will, sir; but I will return presently.

Dund. (*howling*) Don't! I sha'n't be at home.

Pent. (*in a melancholy tone to LETITIA*) Beauteous, but too fleeting illusion, we shall meet again. Alas! that windmill never thine can be! (*heaves a profound sigh*) Ah! *Exit, R.*

Dund. The idea of an Englishman's house being his castle

after this. Coming here, bothering me about his windmill. Hang his windmill! (MUSICIANS *outside strike up* "Power of Love") Ah! the native talent. (*starts off dancing as though in spite of himself; he does this every time the music is heard outside*) To think that I am keeping fifteen amiable individuals waiting all this time. (*irritably, to LETITIA*) Now, then, what's the matter?

Leti. (*sentimentally*) Ah, uncle? I am the most wretched of wives!

Dund. (*dancing*) What absurdity! Surely your husband—

Leti. The monster! (*abruptly*) Why did you marry me to that man?

Dund. (*dancing*) Why, you chose him yourself!

Leti. (*impetuously*) Why did you let me choose him?

(MUSICIANS *outside stop*.)

Dund. You told me you couldn't exist without him.

Leti. You ought not to have believed me; I hate and detest him; he's a hypocrite. (*sobbing*) He never loved me.

Dund. Come—come—come. (*aside*) I shall lose the train.

Leti. (*tragically*) You've unfeelingly sacrificed me.

Dund. (*starting*) I have?

Leti. Yes; you ought to have known better, an old man like you!

Dund. (*starting*) Aha! that's pleasant! In my new coat, too! (*railway bell and whistle heard, very loud*) Aha! there goes my train, by Jupiter!

MUSICIANS *again strike up* "Power of Love," *outside*.)

Dund. (*dancing*) Another reminder from the British professors. I'll start, without further ceremony. (*hastens towards c. door; just as he reaches it, he runs violently against LANGTON*)

Enter LANGTON, running.

Lang. Ah, I knew I should find her here!

Dund. Ah! here's the husband now. (LETITIA *utters a slight shriek, and endeavors to escape through R. door, but LANGTON withholds her.*)

Lang. My dear Tish—now, do let us understand each other.

Leti. (*scornfully*) Get away, sir; I'll have nothing to say to you!

Lang. Now my dear Mr. Dunducketty. (*catches hold of DUNDUCKETTY as he is endeavoring to slink away*) I appeal to you.

Dund. (*bawling*) Don't; I'd rather you wouldn't!

Leti. Uncle!

Lang. (*bawling*) My dear sir!

Leti.	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{both} \\ \text{together} \\ \text{—loud} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{You'll be horrified to hear that Charles} \\ \text{treats me in the most unfeeling manner—} \\ \text{You'll be surprised to hear that Letitia} \\ \text{has been so frightfully ill-tempered—} \end{array} \right.$
Lang.		

Dund. (*bawling*) One at a time; I haven't heard a word yet. Now, Letitia — what is the matter?

PENTONVILLE suddenly appears at R. door.

Pent. I quite forgot to — (*clenching his fists — aside*) Aha! my hated rival's there!

Leti. I tell you, uncle, he won't do anything I ask him!

Lang. (*bitterly*) I suppose you allude to that turquoise bracelet at Storr & Mortimer's?

Leti. Of course I do.

Lang. (*turning to DUNDUCKETTY*) My dear sir, she has six other bracelets already!

Leti. (*impetuously*) But I haven't got *that one*, and I want *that one* (*stamping*), and I am determined to have *that one*!

Pent. (*aside, at door*) And she *shall* have that one — stingy villain!

Leti. But that's not all, uncle; he actually refused to take me yesterday to the exhibition of the "Conversing Salmon."

Dund. (*to LANGTON, reproachfully*) Why didn't you take her to the "Conversing Salmon?"

Lang. Because I couldn't — pressing business!

Leti. A mean pretext, sir. What is it that prevents you from taking me this morning to the panorama of "Gravesend by moonlight?"

Dund. (*to LANGTON, reproachfully*) Ah! why don't you take her to Gravesend by moonlight?

Lang. Because she has seen it twice already.

Leti. (*angrily*) What's *that* matter if I wish to see it again!

Pent. (*at door*) She *shall* see it again, too. Penurious puppy!

Exit, hastily.

Dund. (*who has been turning from one to the other, unable to get a word in*) Well, so far, I really can't see anything so very dreadful.

Leti. But, uncle, it isn't so much this that I care about — it's the consciousness that when a husband refuses his wife anything so soon after marriage — it's the proof that he — (*sobbing*) he — he doesn't love her!

Lang. (*coaxingly*) Now, my dear.

(MUSICIANS outside strike up "Power of Love.")

Dund. (*dancing*) Aha! that strain again! Bother Gravesend by moonlight; I shall never get to Bushy Park by sunlight!

Lang. (*coaxingly*) Now, really, my dear Tish.

Leti. (*imperiously*) Hold your tongue, sir! I'll have nothing more to do with you; I — I'll never speak to you again; and I — I'll stay and spend the rest of my life with uncle!

Dund. (*starting*) The devil you will!

LETITIA rushes off impetuously into room R., where she is heard to lock and bolt the door.

Dund. (*horrified*) By Jove, she's locked and bolted the door! She evidently means to stop. They'll begin forfeits without me. (*frantic*) It's getting agonizing!

Lang. (*pointing to door*) There, sir, what do you think of that?

Dund. (*angrily*) Think, sir! I think your conduct is infamous!

Lang. (*surprised*) My conduct?

Dund. Yes, sir. I'll never forgive you for actually driving your unhappy wife to take refuge in my apartments! (*aside*) The widow will be secured before I can get there; I shall be cut out to a dead certainty!

Lang. (*surprised*) But, my dear sir!

Dund. A meek, tender, lamb-like infant, whose happiness I had entrusted to your keeping—I am surprised at you, sir! (*aside*) If I could only make my escape! (*making towards hamper.*)

Lang. (*following him up*) Well, sir, if you mean to encourage Tish in all her absurd caprices, my wife and I had better live out of town!

Dund. (*eagerly, taking up hamper*) A first-rate idea. (*going*) Good-morning.

Lang. (*coaxingly*) By the by, you promised to speak to Sir William Binks for me—about that appointment down at Reading.

Dund. (*endeavoring to get away*) All right—next week—next week! (*aside*) I'll slip off and leave them in possession. (*approaches door.*)

Lang. Next week, my dear sir! (*following him up*) To be of any use it must be done *at once*. (*coaxingly*) Now, couldn't you call upon Sir William this morning?

Dund. (*starts*) This morning; impossible! A—a—particular engagement. (*going*) Good-by!

Lang. (*following him up*) Remember, my dear sir, our domestic peace—our whole prospects in life depend upon your going immediately!

Dund. (*aside*) There's no help for it; I must keep my promise. (*railway bell and whistle heard*) Aha! there goes another train. Instead of going by the twelve o'clock, I'll go by the twelve-forty. (*takes off lounging coat—aside, vexed*) Off with this thirty-shilling emblem of rustic enjoyment. I can't call on Sir William in a "Zephyr!" (*MUSICIANS strike up the "Pow-of Love" again*) Aha! the widow's favorite again—agonizing reminder! (*mechanically starts off dancing.*)

Lang. (*joyously*) There's a good fellow! I knew he would.

Dund. (*putting on frock coat—angrily*) I who had made up my mind to a long day of rural felicity with that fascinating female! (*goes to window.*)

Lang. (*knocking at door, n.*) Letitia! (*listening*) Letitia! What a headstrong little vixen it is. (*continues listening.*)

Dund. (*looking out of window*) Halloa! there's only one cab. Why, where's my handsom? (*calls*) Mrs. Muffit!

Enter MRS. MUFFIT, R.

Mrs. M. Yes, sir.

Dund. Where's my hansom, Mrs. Muffit?

Mrs. M. Please, sir, Mr. Alphonso de Pentonville went away in it.

Dund. The devil he did!

Lang. (*approaching him*) Alphonso de Pentonville! Why that's the fellow who used to play the flute under your niece's window.

Exit MRS. MUFFIT, R.

Dund. Confound his impudence! I shall have to turn in with the "native talent." (*angrily, putting on his hat*) The widow will never forgive me — after that squeeze of the hand, too! I might have been playing at forfeits with her now. It's abominable.

Exit, angrily, R.

Lang. (*alone*) What an obliging fellow Dunducketty is. However, he's wrong about Tish; I sha'n't give in. (*drawing of bolt is heard*) Aha! she is about to issue from her entrenchment. (*as door opens, he conceals himself behind it.*)

Leti. I hear nothing; I suppose they are all gone out.

Lang. (*stepping from behind door*) All, except me!

Leti. (*shrieks*) Aha! go away, sir!

(*attempts once more to take refuge in room L., but LANGTON places himself between her and the door.*)

Lang. (*endeavoring to put his arm around her waist*) What! Still angry with its Charley Warley?

Leti. Don't attempt to coax me, sir. I declare I'll never forgive you.

Lang. (*laughing*) Now, really, Tish — ha, ha, ha! — this is too absurd!

Leti. (*aside*) The aggravating wretch is laughing. (*aloud — angrily*) I tell you I hate and detest you.

Lang. (*offended*) Oh! very well, Miss; since you're determined to persevere in your obstinacy, we'll see now — we'll see who'll be the first to give in.

Leti. Very well, sir; we will see — we will see.

(*they walk rapidly to and fro on opposite sides of the stage.*)

Enter MRS. MUFFIT, with small parcel, R.

Mrs. M. A parcel for Mrs. Langton.

Leti. For me? (*opening parcel*) The turquoise bracelet, and tickets for the "Conversing Salmon" and "Gravesend by Moonlight," I declare!

Lang. (*astounded*) Nonsense!

Leti. (*laughing*) Yes, sir — pretend to be surprised — do.

Lang. I solemnly assure you I —

Leti. (*laughingly — stopping his mouth with her hand*) Hold your tongue, sir; you're a dear, kind, good Charlie; and now I don't mind kissing you!

Lang. But, my dear Tish, I tell you —

Re-enter DUNDUCKETTY, hastily, just as LETITIA throws her arm round LANGTON'S neck.

Dund. (*as he enters*) Sir William Binks wasn't at home. Aha! they've made it up again; that's lucky!

Leti. (*perceiving him, and holding towards him the bracelet and tickets*) Look here, uncle; Charles has given in, like a dear good fellow!

Lang. (*bewildered*) I tell you I haven't!

Leti. Ha! don't attempt to deny it, sir — but the "Conversing Salmon" begins at half-past one. I must run and put on my things again.

Dund. (*aside*) It's all right now. (*taking off frock coat*) I shall start at once. (*singing gayly*) Tra-la-la.

Lang. (*puzzled*) Incomprehensible! Who can have sent these things?

Dund. (*putting on "Zephyr" complacently*) On once more with this highly becoming thirty shillings' worth, and off I go.

Lang. (*starting*) Aha! I have it; this over-indulgent uncle has sent them here in my name.

Dund. (*taking up hamper*) Now, then, for Bushy Park. (*to LANGTON*) Good young man!

Lang. (*angrily*) I'm not a good young man.

Dund. But I say you are an excellent young man. Good-by, my boy. (*approaches door*) You've behaved extremely well in this matter.

Lang. (*angrily*) Pooh, pooh, sir; you have behaved extremely ill in this matter! (*gets between DUNDUCKETTY and door*) You've led Letitia to look upon me as a vacillating, irresolute nonentity!

Dund. (*astounded — coming forward*) I have?

Lang. Yes, sir; Letitia is at this moment triumphing over what she considers her husband's weakness; my ascendancy is lost forever.

Dund. (*putting down hamper upon stool in front of fireplace*) Now what the devil do you mean?

Lang. Mean, sir! You know well enough you sent these things yourself, that Letitia might think they came from me, and so reconcile us.

Dund. (*angrily*) I did? I'll be hanged if I did.

Lang. (*puzzled*) No! Who, then, can have done this?

Dund. (*aside*) The proprietor of the windmill must have had a finger in this pie!

Lang. Stay; the jeweller's name must be inside. I'll enquire of him. (*endeavors to open casket.*)

Dund. (*aside*) There'll be an awful row if he does. I had better pretend I sent them, or I shall never get away. (*affecting candor*) Ah! I see disguise is useless; I may as well confess it was a little harmless stratagem—a—a—little ingenious subterfuge of mine.

Lang. (*who has opened the case*) It was nothing of the kind, sir. (*pulls out note*) Do you write poetry?

Dund. Eh?

Lang. (*giving him paper — angrily*) There, sir—read that!

Dund. (*reading nervously*) "To her who never mine can be!"

"Accept, dear one, the jewel bright

Thy tyrant did deny:

Why did'st thou thus my suit requite,—

Ah, why? ah, why? ah, why?"

Lang. (*angrily*) Is that your style of composition, sir?

Dund. (*evasively*) A—a—it's rather pretty, isn't it?

Lang. (*angrily pointing to paper*) Are those your initials, sir? Does "A. de P." stand for Peter Dunducketty?

Dund. (*confused*) Not—a—a—not generally; but—a—a—under peculiar circumstances—

Lang. (*bitterly*) Nonsense, sir! "A de P." stands for Alphonso de Pentonville.

Dund. (*aside*) The romantic young man was listening at the keyhole.

Lang. (*with calm ferocity*) There's only one course left me; I—I'll instantly exterminate him!

Dund. (*alarmed*) No, don't!

Lang. I will—I will! (*majestically*) I'll first of all interrogate my wife, and then I'll annihilate the scoundrel! (*approaching door*) Mrs. Langton—Mrs. Charles Langton!

Dund. (*aside*) I do believe Fortune, Fate, Destiny, and the three furies, have all combined to prevent my going to this picnic! (*excited*) The forfeits are going on now! (*starting*) Horrible thought! Somebody may be kissing the widow at this very moment—Oh dear! oh dear! (*in his extreme agitation, he sits down on hamper, which gives way; tremendous smash of plates heard; starting up wildly*) The pigeon-ple, by Jupiter!

Enter LETITIA, gayly, with bonnet and shawl on.

Leti. (*holding up her arm with bracelet*) Doesn't it look beautiful?

Lang. (*amazed*) What unblushing audacity! (*angrily*) Give me that bracelet, madam.

Leti. (*surprised*) Give it you! Why?

Dund. (*aside to LETITIA*) Give it him; I'll give you another.

Leti. But I tell you I like this better than any bracelet I ever saw in my life.

Lang. (*sarcastically*) And well, madam, do I know the reason for this preference. Once more, I *insist* upon your giving me that bracelet.

Leti. You insist upon it, sir? Then I shall do nothing of the kind!

Lang. (*angrily*) What, madam?

(*railway bell and whistle heard.*)

Dund. (*aside*) Good gracious me, there goes another! (*aside to LETITIA*) You'd better humor him; now let me. (*unclasping bracelet from her arm*) It's a—a—a—little peculiarity of his. (*gives bracelet to LANGTON*) There! you see how little she cares about the paltry bauble.

Leti. (*angrily*) I beg your pardon, uncle; I care a great deal about it!

Lang. You hear her—you hear her! Perhaps, madam, you also care for the tickets?

Leti. Of course I do!

Lang. (*in a violent passion*) Then see here, madam! (*angrily tearing up tickets*) There goes the "Conversing Salmon," and there goes "Gravesend by Moonlight!"

Leti. Oh, uncle, he has torn up my tickets!

Lang. He has, madam, and—(*tearing up the note*)—the wish-washy nonsense that accompanied them.

Leti. (*amazed*) Wishy-washy nonsense?

Lang. (*who has walked up to window, which he throws open*) Yes, madam. (*throwing pieces of paper out of window*) There!

Dund. (*irritably*) Don't throw things out of my window! (*shout heard without—"Hooray!"*) There—they're hooraying; they think it's a scramble. Oh dear! oh dear!

Lang. (*at door, buttoning up his coat*) Now to seek out the impertinent puppy, and teach him a lesson in versification that will last him for some time to come! (*puts on DUNDUCKETTY'S hat.*)

Leti. (*alarmed*) Charles—uncle, what does he mean?

Dund. I say, gently; that's my hat!

Lang. (*not heeding, at door*) I'll polish up his style for him!
Exit, angrily.

Dund. (*at door, angrily*) Bring back that hat! He's got my "truly rural!" He's out of his mind! There'll be manslaughter!

Leti. Manslaughter! (*alarmed*) Oh, uncle, uncle, if anything was to happen to my dear Charles, I shouldn't survive it a second!

Dund. I thought you hated and detested him?

Leti. No, no; I'm very fond of him. Run, uncle—run, run, run!

Dund. (*irritably*) Oh, ah!—run, run, run!

(*MUSICIANS outside strike up again.*)

Dund. (*mechanically starts off dancing*) There they go again. It's cruel of them, it is. Off again with the symbol of rural felicity. (*bitterly, putting on frock*) Donkey rides, indeed,

here am I compelled to turn policeman, and prevent two young rascals from punching one another's heads!

Leti. (who has been walking up and down in great agitation) Fly, uncle, fly!

Dund. (irritably) It's easy to talk about flying. (*taking up LANGTON'S hat*) I've got nothing to fly in but this thing! (*putting it on, it is much too large, and comes half over his face*) Here's a fit! (*stamps*) One more obstacle, and I shall go stark, staring mad!

Exit furiously, R.

Leti. Oh, dear, dear, dear! what is all this about? My poor dear Charles! Uncle said something about his fighting — with whom — with whom?

Enter PENTONVILLE, R., during last words.

Pent. (in a hollow voice) With me, madam!

Leti. (turning round in surprise) With you, sir! How came you here?

Pent. Your uncle forgot to shut the street door; as he stepped out, I stepped in. Your infatuated husband is doubtless at this moment clamoring for my life at the door of my private residence (*thumping himself on the chest*); but I'm not at home, madam — I'm not at home!

Leti. But, sir, what have you done?

Pent. Done! Beauteous illusion, have I not had the unspeakable felicity of offering you that bracelet — those tickets for the "Conversing Salmon?"

Leti. (surprised) You, sir? (*aside, greatly disappointed*) Then it wasn't Charles! (*bitterly disappointed*) He hasn't given in, after all!

Pent. Have you deigned to read my verses — the overflowings of a blighted heart?

Leti. (not attending) There — there — don't bother me with your nonsense! (*sits down at table, L., evidently much disappointed, and mechanically takes up the letter which lies upon it.*)

Pent. (mortified) Nonsense! Can you thus harshly qualify the overflowings of a despairing soul?

Leti. (who has glanced at letter) What's this?

Pent. (complacently, aside) She is evidently re-perusing my verses. She seems affected!

Leti. (reading) "Profit by the change in your domestic arrangements — (*reading hastily*) Eleven ladies — handsome widows — forfeits — and other recreations." Horrible suspicion! During our absence from town, all Charles's letters have been forwarded here. There's no address. It cannot be for uncle! "Change in his domestic arrangements" — that means our marriage. It must be for Charles; he little thought I was coming here to-day. "Widow — picnic — forfeits" — yes, he has been trying to get away all day; this very quarrel with Mr. Pentonville may be a mere pretext to get away — a hand-

some widow, too—the faithless monster! But I'll be revenged! Picnics, eh? (*going to sofa*) Why, what's this? A hamper of provisions! The calculating schemer has actually had them secretly conveyed here! (*quickly unfastens hamper, and places contents on table*) I'll settle his provisions for him!

Pent. (*watching her proceedings with amazement, aside*) Why, dear me, what is she doing?

Leti. Cold fowl—pigeon-pie! (*hysterically*) I—I'll have a picnic, too! (*imperiously motioning to chair at table*) Mr. Pentonville, sit down!

Pent. (*surprised*) Oh—wi—wi—with pleasure! (*sits R. of table.*)

Leti. (*hastily cutting up pie*) Do you like pigeon-pie?

Pent. (*amazed*) I—I—

Leti. (*heaps his plate with pie*) You do; then eat—devour—consume!

Pent. (*aside*) Can I believe my senses? How unfortunate that I've only just breakfasted. (*observing that she continues to heap his plate with pie—rising*) My dear madam, I am really afraid you—you've rather overdone me!

Leti. (*imperiously*) Commence at once, sir—or never speak to me more!

Pent. (*hastily sitting down again*) Oh—that being the case, I—I—I'll do my best. (*begins cramming himself with pie—speaking with his mouthful.*)

Leti. (*aside*) Aha! Mr. Charles, you go to picnics with handsome widows, eh? (*aloud, hysterically*) Mr. Pentonville, he shall see that we have our picnics too.

Pent. (*surprise*) Eh?

Leti. (*vacantly*) Some cold fowl, did you say?

Pent. No, no,—I—I—

Leti. (*helping him*) I insist, sir!

Pent. (*aside*) I—I shall be laid up after this—I know I shall. (*takes pieces of pie off plate, and crams them into his pocket and hat*) Artifice must achieve what Nature is unable to accomplish!

Leti. (*mechanically endeavoring to uncork bottle*) Wine, too?

Pent. (*seizing bottle*) Allow me, I beg.

Leti. I have it. (*aloud*) You shall fetch me a fly presently. PENTONVILLE starts—(*aside*) Yes, he shall take me to Bushy Park. I'll find out who this handsome widow is.

Pent. (*whose mouth is so full that he has only just breath to answer*) A fly! (*aside*) distracting prospect; a drive in a one-horse vehicle with her who never mine can be.

Leti. (*affecting gayety*) Mr. Pentonville, you're not getting on; a little more cold fowl? (PENTONVILLE mechanically grasps his knife and fork; LETITIA pours out some wine into goblet) Some wine, Mr. Pentonville?

Pent. (*taking glass, with his mouth full*) Bewitching enigma, I—I (*is interrupted by a violent fit of coughing*) Ugh, ugh, ugh.

Leti. A little more wine, Mr. Pentonville!

Pent. (*puts down glass, and convulsively resumes knife and fork—aside*) I can't hold out much longer!

Leti. (*hysterically*) Now this is what I call *real enjoyment*.

Pent. It is, indeed. (*half choking*) I shall burst—

Leti. (*surprised*) Sir?

Pent. (*swallowing a mouthful*) With *delight*, my dear madam, with *delight*.

Re-enter DUNDUCKETTY, out of breath, with LANGTON'S hat on.

Dund. I've lost *two more trains*, and couldn't catch him, after all. (*perceiving PENTONVILLE*) What, this infernal fellow again!

Pent. (*with his mouth full*) Eh?

Dund. (*aside*) Why, the rascal's devouring my provisions. (*angrily to PENTONVILLE*) Do you know whose *pigeon-pie* you're consuming?

Pent. (*with dignity*) Sir, I'm lunching by *command*!

Leti. Yes, uncle, I invited him!

Dund. The devil you did! Why, that's the man your husband has just stepped out to *annihilate*!

Leti. I know it, uncle (*gloomily*), and a *great deal* more!

Dund. Eh?

Pent. (*aside*) That last piece of *pie-crust* has done the business. (*in a melancholy tone*) I—I've ruined my digestion forever! (*helps himself meantime to another glass of wine; as he raises glass to his lips, DUNDUCKETTY rushes towards him and seizes his arm.*)

Dund. Put that glass down, sir! Have you any idea whose sherry you are imbibing?

Pent. (*tragically*) Talk not to me, old man. I'm invited, I tell you!

Dund. Old man! (*angrily*) Sir, I've put up with a great deal from you already; but that last epithet has done it! (*bursting forth into a paroxysm of rage, and seizing PENTONVILLE by the collar*) Get out of my house, sir! (*just at this moment MUSICIANS outside again strike up "Power of Love;" starting*) That seductive air again! Distraction! (*convulsively commences dancing, but suddenly recollecting himself, resumes his hold of PENTONVILLE*) Get out of my house, I say!

Pent. (*struggling*) I—I sha'n't! Leave me alone, sir!

Leti. Yes, go, sir; lose no time in fetching—

Pent. (*eagerly*) The one-horse vehicle? It shall be here immediately. (*adjusting his coat—to DUNDUCKETTY*) I tell you, sir, that I was lunching by command! (*at door*) By command, sir!

Exit, R.

Dund. (*utterly amazed*) I say, Miss Letitia, you seem going it. What will your husband say to this?

Leti. Husband! I've done with him! (*tragically*) Uncle (*throwing her arms round DUNDUCKETTY'S neck*) I'll never leave you more!

Dund. (*terror-stricken*) If I don't have St. Vitus after this, why, it's a pity!

Leti. (*indignantly*) The faithless Charles is basely deceiving me!

Dund. Impossible! (*aside*) Another confounded impediment! Another two minutes, and I shall lose the two o'clock!

Enter LANGTON, hastily.

Lang. (*angrily*) The scoundrel wasn't at home; but the moment he returns (*shaking his fist*) —

Leti. (*sarcastically*) Really, it's hardly worth while quarrelling about a wife who (*majestically*) is about to leave you forever!

Lang. (*starting*) Leave me forever! (*to DUNDUCKETTY*) What does she mean?

Dund. (*in a dejected tone*) I—I haven't the remotest idea. (*railway bell and whistle heard*) I've lost another!

Leti. (*to LANGTON*) Listen, sir, and tremble. (*reading*) "Dear Bricksiwicksey" —

Dund. (*starting*) Halloa!

Leti. "Profit by the change in your domestic arrangements."

Dund. (*fumbling in all his pockets*) Badger's letter, by all that's unlucky.

Leti. (*half crying*) "The handsome widow will be there, you sly dog." (*speaking*) Sly, indeed!

Lang. The handsome widow?

Dund. What a very critical position for an exemplary uncle!

Leti. (*reading*) "There will be donkey racing, forfeits, and other rustic recreations."

(MUSICIANS outside strike up "Power of Love.")

Dund. Rustic recreations! (*nervously commences dancing.*)

Leti. (*vehemently*) How dare you, sir, indulge in rustic recreations with a handsome widow?

Lang. (*indignantly*) I deny anything of the kind. (*taking letter*) Bad—Bad—Badger! I know nobody of the name.

Leti. Indeed, sir. He seems tolerably intimate with you, though, for he calls you "Bricksiwicksey."

Lang. But I solemnly assure you —

Leti. Disguise is useless, sir. You dare not assert that such frivolity has been addressed to a respectable elderly gentleman like uncle!

Dund. (*spasmodically*) Aha! (*dances nervously—aside*) I'm getting delirious.

Leti. You surely don't suppose my uncle goes donkey riding!

Dund. (*confused*) A—a—a likely story!

Leti. Or—or plays at forfeits with widows, however handsome!

Dund. (*exceedingly confused*) A—a—I should think not, indeed!

Lang. (indignantly) I tell you I know nothing whatever of the letter, or the writer! (*examines it*) No address! Some one must have accidentally left it.

Dund. (eagerly) A — a — a — not at all unlikely!

Lang. Perhaps that impertinent scoundrel who was here this morning!

Dund. (aside) A drowning man catches at a straw. (*aloud, stammering*) I — I — always thought that Pentonville was fast; if he ever dares to show his face here again!

Enter PENTONVILLE, running.

Pent. The one-horse vehicle is at the door. (*perceiving the rest*) Hallo!

Lang. (angrily) Why, there he is. (*thrusts DUNDUCKETTY aside; rushes to PENTONVILLE and collars him*) Now, then, sir, how dare you send my wife presents?

Pent. Because you inhumanly refused her them!

Lang. Pitiful eavesdropper, see how much she values your offerings! (*rushes to window, and violently throws out bracelet; smash of opposite window heard.*)

Dund. (horrified) The green-grocer's bow front!

Lang. (angrily, approaching PENTONVILLE) And now, sir, prepare to follow that bracelet! (*collars him.*)

Pent. Keep off, sir! (*tussle.*)

Dund. (aghast) Here's a comfortable way of going to a picnic. Hallo! gently! (*gets between them*) Leave him to me; I'll talk to him like several fathers. (*approaching PENTONVILLE, mysteriously*) Rash, reckless young man! all is discovered.

Pent. Eh?

Dund. Inconsiderate youth, regain your vehicle!

Lang. Be quick; you'll keep the widow waiting.

Pent. The widow! (*retreats as the other three walk him up towards door.*)

Leti. You'll be too late for the forfeits!

Pent. (amazed) I demand an explanation!

Dund. (hastily interposing) We — we refuse anything of the kind!

Leti. You wicked young man!

Dund. } (pushing him out) The donkey races will be over.

Leti. } (struggling) You're all mad! Exit, angrily.

Lang. } Good-by, Bricksywickys!

Leti. } (aside) That was a clever shave!

Dund. (re-appearing at door, furiously) You're all mad!

(LETITIA and LANGTON push him out again.)

Dund. (taking off frock coat, aside) Thank goodness, I've got out of that! (*putting on light coat*) On again with my

Arcadian vestment. I haven't missed more than eighteen trains. I shall be in time for tea and shrimps. I'm off this time, and no mistake! (*aloud, going*) Good-by—good-by! (*just as he reaches door a tremendous downpour of rain is heard outside*—[*very loud*]—*dismally*) Hallo! what's that?

Leti. (*running to window*) Oh, uncle, it is raining so!

Dund. (*veezed*) You don't mean that?

Lang. (*who has looked out of window*) It's coming down in pailfuls! (*the rain redoubles*) Do you hear that? You'll never be able to go.

Dund. (*exasperated*) Go, sir? I'm determined to go, if it was to rain cataracts, and blow hurricanes! I'd go, sir, if there was no other vehicle left me but Green's Balloon. (*calling*) Mrs. Muffit! bring me my waterproof coat and my India-rubber over-alls! (*angrily, turning to LANGTON*) Go, sir! I'd go if I had to perform the journey in—in—in the "Great Eastern!"

Enter SERVANT, running.

Servant. Please, sir, here's a telegraphic dispatch just come for you.

Dund. For me? (*hastily taking it and reading*) "Hampton Court, three o'clock—If you haven't started, don't; the widow's bolted with a Cavalry Officer. Yours, sympathetically, Badger." (*utterly dumbfounded*) That's a settler!

Enter MRS. MUFFIT, running, loaded with coat, comforter, over-alls, &c.

Mrs. M. Here you are, sir!

Dund. (*ruefully*) Thank you; under the circumstances, I won't trouble you. (*aside*) The perfidious hyæna!

Leti. Why, what's the matter, uncle?

Dund. (*affecting cheerfulness*) Oh, nothing—nothing! (*aside*) After that squeeze of the hand, too! But it's better as it is; if she hadn't run away now, I've no doubt she would at some future, and, perhaps, less convenient period.

Leti. Then you'll dine with us now, uncle!

Dund. Yes, my dear, yes. Mrs. Muffit, send for a four-wheeler!

Mrs. M. Four-wheeler, sir! Why, there are two hansoms and a fly at the door now! (*noise heard outside.*)

Enter the three MUSICIANS.

1st Musician. I say, we aren't a goin' to stop here all day; who's a going to settle with us?

Dund. (*in a great flurry*) Bless my soul!

Leti. (*astounded*) Who are these men, uncle?

Dund. (*stammering*) A — a — they're the waits; I forgot them last Christmas. (*to Mrs. MUFFIT*) Pay them, and send them away. (*Mrs. MUFFIT approaches MUSICIANS, who withdraw; DUNDUCKETTY takes off light coat*) Off again with the cerulean emblem of juvenile frivolity, and on once more with the snuff-colored representative of steadiness and sobriety. (*to Audience*) Does anybody know anyone in the habit of frequenting picnics? If so, here's a present for him. (*holding out light coat*) Yes — Forfeits and handsome widows are dangerous recreations for elderly bachelors; it's like the boys and the frogs — the fun's all on one side; besides, and there's no doubt about it — it's a bad plan to begin trying it "on" just as one ought to be leaving it "off!"

MUSICIANS heard playing "The Power of Love" in the distance;
the air is immediately taken up by the ORCHESTRA.

CURTAIN.



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[No. 17.]

I'VE WRITTEN TO BROWNE;

OR,

A NEEDLESS STRATAGEM.

A COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

BY

THOMAS J. WILLIAMS. Esq.

BOSTON:
CHARLES H. SPENCER,
203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1870, Feb. 4.
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I'VE WRITTEN TO BROWNE.

CHARACTERS.

	<i>Olympic Theatre.</i>	<i>Boston Museum.</i>
MR. OTWAY SHERIDAN BROWNE	Mr. G. Vining.	Mr. W. Warren.
MR. PEREGRINE DOTTS . . .	Mr. Lewis Ball.	Mr. J. A. Smith.
MR. CHARLES HETHERINGTON	Mr. W. Gordon.	Mr. J. Wilson.
WILLIAM, a Gardener	Mr. Franks.	Mr. Penkes.
MRS. WALSINGHAM	Mrs. Leigh Murray.	Miss Kate Reignolds.
LAURA her Sister	Miss Cottrill.	Miss Annie Clarke.

SCENE. — Mrs. Walsingham's country house

TIME. — Present day.

COSTUMES.

DOTTS. — Morning or lounging suit.
 BROWNE. — Frock coat buttoned across chest, shirt collar turned down "*a la Byron*."
 HETHERINGTON. — Morning dress, frock coat, &c.
 WILLIAM. — Red waistcoat, shirt sleeves, apron, &c.
 MRS. WALSINGHAM. } Fashionable morning costume.
 LAURA. }

I'VE WRITTEN TO BROWNE.

SCENE. — *An elegantly furnished Apartment in a Country House — door, 1st wing, R. — ditto at back, C., opening upon a picturesque garden.*

MRS. WALSINGHAM *discovered, near table.*

Mrs. W. Eleven o'clock, and Mr. Hetherington not yet come! Strange that he, in general so punctual a visitor, should be late this morning. Ah, here he is at last!

Enter HETHERINGTON, R. D.

Oh, Mr. Hetherington! I've been most impatiently expecting you.

Hether. (*gayly*). Impatiently! my dear madam, the reproach involves so decided a compliment, that I can scarcely regret having deserved it; an accident unexpectedly delayed me, but believe me, if ever ardent lover —

Mrs. W. (*interrupting him*) Lover! My dear Mr. Hetherington, you must cease to style yourself such, — Mr. Peregrine Dotts arrived here last night, from Brussels!

Hether. What does that signify? All you've to do is to tell him you've altered your mind — that during the twelve months he has spent abroad, I, your country neighbor, have had the good fortune to make your acquaintance, and as an inevitable consequence, have fallen desperately in love with you; while you, on your side, are kind enough to look compassionately upon my suit —

Mrs. W. (*interrupting*) Mr. Hetherington!

Hether. (*continuing*) Besides, does it not stand to reason that an elegant young widow like yourself *must* prefer the name of Mrs. Charles Hetherington to that of Mrs. Peregrine Dotts? The thing speaks for itself, — where is this persevering monster?

Mrs. W. (*laughing*) Quietly taking a walk round the garden with my sister Laura, whose acquaintance he made during her stay in Brussels with our aunt, Mrs. Merton; the worthy old

lady has taken advantage of Mr. Dotts's departure for England, to place Laura under his care during the journey.

Hether. Well, something must be done to get rid of the presumptuous fellow! (*starting up angrily*) I — I'll pick a quarrel with him, and blow him clean out of the world!

Mrs. W. Now do not be so *absurdly* impetuous! At my husband's death, his relations thought proper to dispute his will, — they actually went to law with me; and had not Mr. Dotts interested himself in my behalf, I should infallibly have lost my suit. Gratitude *compelled* me to listen to his eager protestations, until, yielding to a sense of his innate merits rather than any affection *I myself* felt for him — I suffered myself to be persuaded into a promise, which it is *now* too late to withdraw.

Hether. (*vexed*). The idea of promising to marry a man you didn't love, simply because he had assisted you in a law-suit! (*impetuously*) Deuce take the fellow! If he *must* fall in love, why didn't he fall in love with your sister Laura?

Mrs. W. (*laughing*). There's no accounting for tastes, you know; you can't reasonably expect me to be angry with the man for preferring *me* to my sister. However, there's *one* chance still left, — "absence," despite what the song tells us, does *not always* "make the heart grow fonder." Mr. Dotts has remained abroad several months longer than was originally intended, and who knows but what in the interim he may have conceived a romantic attachment for some Italian Prima Donna, Swiss Shepherdess, or Spanish Flower Girl? I can only say, that, should any mode of escape present itself, believe me, I shall be but too happy to profit by it!

Hether. (*joyfully*). Mode of escape! *I'll* undertake to think of a *hundred* for you!

Mrs. W. (*sighing*). I fear they are not quite so plentiful. (*LAURA sings without.*) Ah! here comes my sister, Laura. I'll introduce you to her.

Hether. Pardon me, my dear madam, I am in no mood for introductions. I — I'll take a turn down by the river-side and concoct half-a-dozen first-rate schemes for preventing this most barbarous immolation!

Exit, R. D.

Mrs. W. Poor Mr. Hetherington! if he only knew that I am to the full as anxious on the subject as he is —

Enter LAURA.

Well, Laura, quite recovered from the fatigues of the journey, I perceive.

Laura. Oh, yes, sister, I've been walking round the gardens! I declare, Ivy Hall seems, during my absence, to have grown prettier than ever. What a delightful old place it is!

Mrs. W. Dear Laura, I'm overjoyed to hear you say so; for now-a-days a fortnight's residence on the continent suffices to

inspire English people with a thorough contempt for their old-fashioned homes, particularly such a very old-fashioned home as this. But tell me, Laura, before Mr. Dotts left England, I gave him a letter of introduction to your aunt in Brussels, — used you to see much of him during his stay there?

Laura. (somewhat confused) Oh, yes; he used frequently to drop in of an evening — a — a — to play at drafts and dominoes with my aunt.

Mrs. W. (aside). Drafts and dominoes! — exciting recreations. (*aloud*). Now, I want you to give me your candid opinion of Mr. Dotts. He was a plain, matter-of-fact British subject when he left England, but for aught I know he may have come home a Red Republican or a confirmed conspirator, or some other delightful specimen of continental peculiarities.

Laura. (eagerly). My opinion of him is, that he's a very nice, agreeable, dear, good, kind-hearted fellow!

Mrs. W. (slightly surprised). What, all that! Well, Laura, I'm glad to hear that you consider him deserving of such unqualified approbation; and so you think Mr. Dotts would make an excellent husband?

Laura. (sighing). Think! I'm sure he would!

Mrs. W. (sighing). Well, well, we shall see. I have some orders to give the servants. (*aside, going*). Drafts and dominoes! A lively prospect for me, truly. *Exit, L.*

Laura. Ah, if my poor sister only knew the real truth! I'm sure I shall never have the courage to tell her, and I'm quite certain Peregrine never will. It's very wrong of us — I know it is; but it's not our fault, — we couldn't help it.

Dotts pops his head in cautiously, D. in F.

Dotts. (aside). No, she certainly isn't there!

Laura. Ah, Peregrine! why don't you come in?

Dotts. I'm reconnoitring!

Enter Dotts.

Laura. Reconnoitring?

Dotts. Yes. You see, ever since our arrival yesterday, I have had recourse to the most ingenious stratagems, in order to postpone an explanatory *tête-à-tête* with your sister. I was concealed last night for three quarters of an hour behind the drawing-room curtains, and have been shut up all the morning in the summer-house at the bottom of the garden; and how do you think I amused myself in my horticultural seclusion?

Laura. (sighing) I'm sure I don't know.

Dotts. Why, like a second Petrarch, — I wrote a sonnet to my Laura! I jotted it down in pencil on the fly-leaf of my pocket Tasso. It's quite a superior thing; I — I'll read it to you. (*fumbling in his pockets*). Why, dear me, what have I done with the book?

Laura. (hastily) Sonnets, indeed! Is it possible you can

think of such trifles at a moment like this? Think, rather, of what Kate will say when she learns that you, her accepted lover, have for the last three months been paying your addresses to me, her younger sister! Do you know, sir, that it's very deceitful of you?

Dotts. Blame Venus, Cupid, the Fates, the whole heathen mythology, — but don't blame me. Ah, it's all owing to my constitutional susceptibility. A year ago, bewildered by Mrs. Walsingham's wit and beauty, I mistook admiration for affection, and laid siege to her with such irresistible ardor, that it's no wonder I thoroughly fascinated her at last. Ah! (*sighing*) it was not until I met her sister Laura that I learnt what it was to love really — unmistakably — inextinguishably!

Laura. (*sighing*) And I fear — uselessly! You know, sir, I have all along assured you, that unless my sister releases you of her own accord from the engagement you have contracted towards her, you have nothing to hope for from me!

Dotts. (*sighing dolefully*). Infinitessimally small, then, is my chance. Did you notice the horribly affectionate glance she gave me at breakfast, when she asked me if I'd take another cup of coffee? However (*mysteriously*), I've written to Browne!

Laura. Browne! — who's Browne?

Dotts. A particular friend of mine — a wonderfully talented young man; writes plays — excels in every species of dramatic composition, from five-act tragedies down to equestrian dramas. I've written him a detailed description of my unpleasantly peculiar predicament. *He'll* devise some means of extricating me from this most dreadful dilemma!

Laura. Alas, 'tis impossible.

Dotts. My dear Laura, to Otway Sheridan Browne nothing is impossible. It's all in his line of business. He surmounts the most incredible obstacles in his dramas, — why shouldn't he exert his ingenuity to oblige a friend?

Laura. And you're *sure* he'll come?

Dotts. Oh, positive! I've commissioned him to get some foreign bills cashed for me. Oh, I'm confident he'll get us out of it. (*alarmed*). By Jove, here comes Mrs. Walsingham!

Laura. (*hurriedly*). Then I'll make my escape. She mustn't find us talking together again, — she has done so twice already.

Dotts. (*alarmed*). But, bless my soul, you're surely not going to leave us together!

Laura. (*in a flutter*). Yes, I must — I feel so confused — my very embarrassment would arouse her suspicions. *Exit, D. F.*

Dotts. (*horribly alarmed*). Laura, stop! come back! Ah! there's no getting out of it, this time. Here comes Mrs. W. — there's a tender twinkle in her eye that's ominous in the extreme. How aggravatingly perverse is the female character! Implore a woman to remember you, and in less than three weeks she totally forgets you; but only ask her as a particular favor to try and forget you, and she'll think of nothing else for the remainder of her natural existence!

Enter MRS. WALSHINGHAM, L.

Mrs. W. (aside) Mercy on me, there he is, evidently lying in wait for me, with a six months' accumulation of passionate protestations!

Dotts. (affecting suddenly to perceive MRS. WALSHINGHAM). Ah! my dear Mrs. Walsingham, is that you? (*awkwardly*). A—a—I was just at that moment saying to myself—a—a—where is the charming, the fascinating Mrs. Walsingham?

Mrs. W. (alarmed) Indeed; then you have something—a—something particular to say to me?

Dotts. (eagerly). Oh, no—nothing—nothing—that's to say, nothing very particular. (*they sit down—awkward pause—after pause*). Lovely weather!

Mrs. W. Delightful!

Dotts. (aside). Haven't the remotest idea what to say. (*aloud*). A—a charming place, this country seat of yours—so excessively rural!

Mrs. W. Country seats generally are.

Dotts. Of course—of course; but I mean—a—a—so romantically sequestered—a—a—and yet such a handy distance from town.

Mrs. W. It certainly does combine the advantages you mention. (*aside*). Why, what ails the man? he's talking like an auctioneer's advertisement!

Dotts. (aside, after a pause). I really must endeavor to say something epigrammatic—something neatly turned. (*aloud*). The retreat should indeed be delightful to be worthy of the syren who has chosen it for her abode! (*aside*). Under the circumstances, very tidy!

Mrs. W. (aside). The old story! (*aloud*). Did you not tell me you expected a friend to join you here to-day?

Dotts. Yes, I've written to Browne, an old schoolfellow of mine! By the by, I ought to apologize for inviting him without your permission!

Mrs. W. Apologize! My dear Mr. Dotts, are you not at home here?

Dotts. (aside, dolefully). At home! the word is fraught with hymeneal allusions! Browne! Browne! where are you? (*aloud*). I certainly am aware—a—a—that between you and me—a—a—I say between you and me, there is no absolute necessity for ceremonious formality.

Mrs. W. (aside). He's gradually approaching the subject. (*aloud*). It would appear, sir, that absence has—a—a—in no way changed your sentiments?

Dotts. Changed, my dear Mrs. Walsingham? (*nervously*). Can you for a moment—a—a—imagine such a thing? (*eagerly*). And you, my dear madam, has nothing occurred to alter your inclinations?

Mrs. W. (evasively). Dear me, Mr. Dotts, what can have suggested such a question?

Dotts. Oh, nothing — nothing! (*aside*) It's evident she continues to adore me! (*sighing*). What an unlucky wretch I am!

Mrs. W. (*aside*). The tiresome man is faithful! (*rising*). Was ever anything so provoking?

Enter HETHERINGTON, R.

Hether. (*aside, angrily, as he enters*). Can't think of anything, for the life of me!

Mrs. W. Ah, Mr. Hetherington! Now, Mr. Dotts, allow me to introduce you to Mr. Charles Hetherington, the owner of a neighboring estate.

Dotts. (*bowing*) Delighted, I'm sure!

Hether. (*stiffly*). Happy to have the pleasure! (*turns his back upon Dotts — aside, sneeringly*) The happy mortal!

Mrs. W. (*aside*). I must find occupation for these rival suitors! (*aloud*). Gentlemen, as we have the day before us, I propose an excursion to the romantic ruins of an old castle, some miles hence.

Dotts. Delightful! (*aside*) Anything to gain time.

Hether. (*spitefully*). Charming! (*aside*). I—I'm just in the humor for ruins.

Mrs. W. I'll hasten to tell my sister. We'll get ready, and join you immediately. (*to HETHERINGTON, as she passes him*). Now, sir, I trust you'll endeavor to behave politely during my absence.

Exit, L.

Hether. Politely! I should derive the utmost satisfaction from pulverizing the puppy on the spot! (*he again turns his back on Dotts*).

Dotts. (*aside — after a short pause*) Rather a peculiar sort of a country gentleman this! He seems about as social as an English traveller at a foreign *table d'hôte*! I suppose I had better venture something in the shape of an observation! (*aloud*). A — a — fond of the country, sir?

Hether. (*abruptly*). No, sir.

Dotts. Sportsman, sir?

Hether. (*abruptly*). No, sir.

Dotts. A votary of the rod and line, perhaps?

Hether. (*sharply*) Nothing of the sort, sir.

Dotts. Fond of gardening, possibly — dahlias and tulips — hoeing and sowing — and all that sort of thing.

Hether. (*impatiently*). Not by any means, sir. I don't know a rose-tree from a gooseberry-bush.

Dotts. Well, you are a country gentleman!

Hether. Sir, I have no pretensions to the character. I have only resided on my estate since Mrs. Walsingham has done me the honor to become my neighbor. (*aside*). I'll see if I can't make this infernal fellow jealous.

Dotts. (*aloud, carelessly*). Charming person, Mrs. W!

Hether. Charming! You surely mean divine — irresistible — intoxicating!

Dotts. Intoxicating!

Hether. No, no! I mean graceful — elegant — bewitching!

Dotts. (*carelessly*) Oh, all that, of course.

Hether. What wit, too! Her conversational powers are positively wonderful! There's magic in the very sound of her voice.

Dotts. Very agreeable voice! Something between a nightingale and a — (*at a loss for a simile*) — a — a tom-tit.

Hether. (*aside*). A tom-tit! The unpoetical scoundrel!

Dotts. (*carelessly*). I suppose you often drop in to see her?

Hether. Every day, regularly, morning and evening. (*emphatically*). Morning and evening, sir!

Dotts. (*carelessly*). How very kind of you to enliven her solitude!

Hether. (*aside*). There's a consciousness of security about this fellow that will drive me mad with rage! He evidently does not consider me worthy of his jealousy. (*aloud*). Ahem! may I be permitted to inquire, sir, whether the report is correct that you are engaged to Mrs. Walsingham?

Dotts. Well, yes — I have reason to fear — (*correcting himself*) a — a — I mean, to believe — that the rumor is not altogether unfounded.

Hether. Very good, sir; then just listen to me! For several months past, sir, as I have already informed you, I have been in the habit of daily visiting Mrs. Walsingham — I have been her constant companion at home, her assiduous escort while out. We read poetry together in the morning, take walks together in the afternoon, and sing duets together in the evening. In short, sir, the lady's society has become indispensable to me — I can't live without it.

Dotts. (*eagerly grasping his hand*). My dear sir, don't attempt it! Believe me, it would grieve me in the extreme to deprive you of anything so thoroughly essential to your existence!

Hether. (*aside*). Confound the fellow! he's evidently laughing at me! This insulting indifference is assumed solely to exasperate me! If I remain here another moment, I shall most certainly pull the puppy's nose! (*aloud, abruptly*). Sir — sir, I wish you for the present a very good morning. *Exit.*

Dotts. (*alone*). That young man's evidently very far gone on Mrs. W.! — then why the deuce doesn't he propose to her himself? I've no doubt he has — and her insuperable affection for me, has compelled her to reject him! Why, Penelope was an inconstant flirt, compared to Mrs. Walsingham — but it's just like my luck! My only hope is now centred in Browne — the inventive, the imaginative Browne! (*looks out at back*) And, by Jove! here he comes, up the back garden! How the deuce did he ever get there! Oh, Browne, my dear fellow — thrice welcome! This way — this way! delighted to see you, old boy!

Enter BROWNE, at back, with carpet bag, &c., D. F.

Browne. Ah, Dotts, my old Trojan, how are you? Returned from your travels, eh? Why, I vow there's quite an outlandish, foreign cut about you!

Dotts. (*shaking him by the hand*) You don't mean that? But what on earth has made you prefer the back garden to the front door?

Browne. You see, in my ignorance of the locality, I turned down the wrong lane, and so found myself in the rear instead of the front of the house. However, finding the garden gate open, in I walked, and here I am! So now, then, introduce me to our worthy hostess, and have up lunch without loss of time, for this little matutinal trip has sharpened my appetite most distractingly!

Dotts. (*eagerly*) You received my letter?

Browne. Yes; and have duly executed your commission. (*gives Dotts pocket-book*) Here's your money — English bank-notes for foreign bills.

Dotts. (*impatiently*) Oh, hang the money! Have you thought over the fearful dilemma — the terrific crisis which has overtaken this too susceptible heart?

Browne. I have, you inconsistent old sinner — I have — as carefully as ever barrister studied brief; but it's a hopeless case — there's nothing to be done.

Dotts. (*tragically*) Young man, beware how you blight the expectations of a distracted lover, whose last hope is centred in you!

Browne. Sorry to hear it. I flatter myself I can now and then help a friend at a pinch — but this perplexity of yours is quite beyond my humble abilities — breach of promise — lady's own sister, too! The thing's out of the question!

Dotts. (*amazed*) Nonsense, Browne; if it was in one of your plays, you'd get over the difficulty in no time!

Browne. In a play! — yes, I flatter myself I'll undertake to get over anything in a play; but plays and real life are not precisely the same thing, you know. However, stop till I've had some lunch, and I'll see what I can do for you.

Dotts. No, no; the thing must be done at once! Besides, fasting always accelerates the imaginative faculties. (*imploringly*) Come, now, Browne, something in your very best style!

Browne. (*after a moment's consideration*) Is Mrs. Walsingham rich?

Dotts. Very comfortably off.

Browne. Fond of pleasure, gayety, and so forth?

Dotts. Very.

Browne. Not the sort of woman for disinterested affection, and a two-pair back?

Dotts. (*not understanding*) I should say not.

Browne. Then, by Jupiter! I have it. I've been robbed.

Dotts. (starting) Good heavens!

Browne. (coolly) You're suddenly, totally, and irrevocably ruined!

Dotts. (alarmed) The devil I am!

Browne. Don't be alarmed. I'm putting the case hypothetically. We'll suppose that the pocket-book I brought you. Instead of containing one hundred pounds, contained several thousands — and that certain imaginary ticket-of-leave men have robbed me on the road of the entire amount — your whole fortune, we'll say — position in society gone — ruin — beggary — a debtor's prison. You understand?

Dotts. Aha!

Browne. Mrs. Walsingham, believing you to be ruined, like a sensible woman will throw you overboard immediately — you, on your side, as soon as you've got the "kick out" in due form, turn round and explain that the whole affair was a mere ruse, to test the sincerity of Mrs. Walsingham's affection. You then expatiate, in a highly moral strain, on the fickleness of woman-kind in general, and of Mrs. W. in particular — and straightway transfer your affections to Mrs. Walsingham's sister, or Mrs. Walsingham's grandmother, or to any of Mrs. Walsingham's female relations you may think proper.

Dotts. Sublime!

Browne. Isn't it? No one but you witnessed my arrival — nothing could be more apropos — we'll put our scheme into execution this very moment! I'll go out again, and make my entrée in character. (*going*) Be sure to stamp and rave a great deal — don't be afraid of overdoing it! *Exit, D. F.*

Dotts. Let me be sure I quite understand — ruin — beggary — debtor's prison! I see — I knew he'd soon think of something. Wonderful fellow, that Browne! What a member of Parliament he would have made — somehow or other, these "right men" always are in the "wrong" places!

Enter MRS. WALSINGHAM and LAURA, with their bonnets on, and HETHERINGTON, L.

Mrs. W. Here we are, ready at last — we've kept you waiting a long time; but a chancery suit and a lady's toilet, you know, must always take their own time.

Dotts. Don't mention it, I beg! (*aside, to LAURA, mysteriously*) Browne has arrived! A gigantic plot is on foot!

Laura. (surprised) Already! (*they converse apart*)

Hether. (aside, to MRS. WALSINGHAM) Mind, you'll take my arm, you know!

Mrs. W. (aside, to HETHERINGTON) A modest request that, all things considered! Nay, sir — don't look so ferocious — we'll see what can be done for you!

Dotts. (aside) I wonder how Browne's getting on — he'll never be ready in time! (*aloud*) I was just thinking, my dear

madam — a — a — supposing the friend I'm expecting were to arrive while we're out?

Mrs. W. Oh, I've already given the necessary directions — I have ordered preparations to be made for his reception.

Browne. (*without*) Help! help!

Mrs. W. Dear me! — what's that?

Browne. (*without*) Thieves! Robbers! Police! (*general surprise*)

Dotts. Heavens! 'Tis my friend's voice! (*rushing to the door*) Yes, 'tis Browne! But, bless my soul, in what a fearful condition!

Enter BROWNE, D. F., his hat beaten in, his neckerchief untied, his coat turned wrong side out, and his trousers tucked up.

Browne. Thieves! Murder! Where are the rural police? (*falls exhausted into a chair*)

Dotts. (*in a tone of heartfelt sympathy*) My dear Browne, what on earth has happened? (*aside*) What an elaborate make-up!

Browne. (*faintly*) Where am I? (*to Dotts*) Ah, my dear friend! is that you? (*to Mrs. Walsingham, rising*) Pray excuse my presenting myself before ladies in so pitiable a plight! I assure you, I was much better dressed when I left town!

Mrs. W. I can readily believe it; you must have been thrown from your horse!

Browne. Worse, my dear madam — much worse! I've been waylaid, beaten, knocked down, massacred!

All. Massacred!

Browne. When I say massacred, I employ an excusable figure of speech. Alas! the occurrence needs no rhetorical embellishment. I've been robbed, plundered, stripped of everything I had about me!

Dotts. (*with an outrageously violent start*) Of everything? — n — no — you don't mean everything?

Browne. Alas, my dear friend, the expression is but too strictly correct! (*gasping for breath*)

Dotts. (*convulsively*) Go on! Go on!

Browne. You remember that owing to certain unfavorable rumors which had reached you as to the solidity of your bank, you requested me to draw out a large sum of money from their establishment, and bring it you here!

Dotts. I did! I did! Torture me not! — let me know the worst!

Browne. The villains who attacked me have made off with every penny of your money!

Dotts. (*wildly*) Good gracious! (*gives three violent stamps, turns round three times, and falls into HETHERINGTON'S arms*)

Mrs. W. Was it, then, so very large a sum?

Dotts. My — my entire fortune! (*frantically*) Ruin! Beggary! Bankruptcy!

(*Makes a violent dash at his own hair, which he pretends to pull out, utters an hysterical "Ha, ha, ha!" and falls into a chair*)

Hether. (*to Browne*) But of course you took the numbers of the notes?

Browne. Unbusiness-like wretch that I am! I entirely forgot that essential particular. (*Dotts utters a howl of despair — aside, to Dotts*) Devilish well! Keep it up!

Dotts. (*wildly*) The parish! Stone-breaking! Out-door relief! Oakum! Water gruel!

Mrs. W. (*to BROWNE*) How very shocking! Where was this outrageous robbery committed?

Browne. In the very middle of a neighboring wood. You see I got out of the train one station off, on purpose that I might stroll amid the trees, hoping that the sylvan nature of the scenery might inspire me with ideas for a melo-drama, which I am now writing for one of the transpontine theatres — magnificent work — full of the most startling situations, I assure you! Well, I had just reached the centre of the wood —

Mrs. W. But, my dear sir, was it not very imprudent of you to trust yourself in so lonely a spot, with so large a sum of money about you?

Browne. Imprudent, madam? Imprudent is too mild a term! It was stupid — asininely stupid! But even the most talented individuals deserve the epithet sometimes! Well, as I was saying, I had just reached the very thickest part of the forest, and was just ruminating as to whether Grimbardo Sanguinoso, the hero of my melo-drama, should be hanged, shot, or drowned, when, at a turning in the road, four desperate ruffians, their faces disguised with black masks, rushed forth, and seized me by the throat!

All. How dreadful!

Browne. I roared for assistance; but, unfortunately, policemen, when wanted, are almost as scarce in the middle of a forest as they are in the crowded thoroughfares of the metropolis. However, I resisted desperately; a grand combat of five ensued, which would have created a sensation at the Victoria! By means of a remarkably stout gingham umbrella, I contrived for a time to keep the ruffians at bay, until at last, overcome by numbers, the villains felled me to the earth, ransacked my pockets, and were just proceeding to cut my throat with an enormous bread and cheese knife belonging to one of the party, when the opportune braying of a donkey put the scoundrels to flight!

Mrs. W. What a horrible occurrence!

Browne. Profiting by this most timely zoological intervention, I immediately took to my heels, and with no small difficulty reached your hospitable dwelling, in the somewhat rumpled condition in which you now behold me!

Dotts. (who has been listening in silent surprise, aside) Well, he has inventive powers!

Laura. What a narrow escape!

Browne. Most unpleasantly so! I forgot to mention that the heartless savages have absconded with the MS. of an original five-act tragedy, which I happened to have in my left-hand coat pocket, together with a ham and beef sandwich, done up in brown paper; but 'tis not for myself I grieve — 'tis for you, "poor and broken bankrupt there!" *(to Dotts)* Forgive me, friend of my youth, that I did not suffer myself to be hacked to pieces in defence of your property!

Dotts. (applying handkerchief to his eyes) Under the circumstances, Browne, I—I could hardly expect it of you! *(Dotts and Brown embrace tenderly)*

Browne. (aside) You're taking it too quietly! Break out again!

Dotts (rushing wildly to and fro) Lost—ruined—my tenderest hopes nipped in the bud! Ha, ha, ha!

(Runs wildly round room, throws himself upon sofa, and begins kicking violently—Mrs. WALSINGHAM and LAURA endeavor to pacify him).

Mrs. W. My dear sir, be calm, I entreat!

Hether. (aside) The misfortune seems to elicit an amount of sympathy from Mrs. Walsingham, of which I by no means approve! *(aloud, to Dotts)* Really, sir, you should not give way to despair in this way—there is yet a chance of recovering your property! I'll gather together my servants, and with some of the neighboring peasants I will immediately scour the country round, in search of these miscreants! *(going)* 'Twas near the centre of the forest you were attacked?

Browne. A—a—as nearly as possible the centre.

Hether. (going) I'm after the vagabonds at once! *Exit, D. R.*

Browne. (calling after him) Run, my dear fellow, run! but be very careful; they're most determined ruffians!

Mrs. W. What a heart-rending occurrence! *(to BROWNE)* But you must need refreshment—lunch awaits you in the adjoining room. Go, Laura, and see that this ill-used gentleman be properly cared for!

Browne. Lunch—*(aside)*—at last! *(faintly)* Thanks—thanks! *(looking piteously towards Dotts, who has buried his head under the sofa cushions)* Alas, my unhappy friend! to what a condition have I reduced him!

Exeunt BROWNE and LAURA, L.

Mrs. W. (approaching sofa) My dear Mr. Dotts, permit me to assure you how deeply I sympathize with your misfortune; but pray keep up your spirits. Mr. Hetherington will, I am sure, take the most energetic steps to insure the arrest of the malefactors.

Dotts. (aside—rising) Now, then, for my dismissal in due form. *(aloud, dolefully)* Alas! I greatly fear his kind exertions

will prove fruitless. The ruffians are doubtless already many miles hence. No, I must call philosophy to my aid, and strive to endure my loss with fortitude! I shall endeavor to obtain a respectable situation, something of a practical nature, a—guard to a railway train, or a—a—captain of a penny steamer—— (*sighing*)

“Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.”

(*producing handkerchief*) But what most afflicts me is the consciousness, the conviction, that this fatal misfortune must necessarily prove an insurmountable barrier to the realization of the hopes I had so fondly cherished.

Mrs. W. What, sir! do you mean to insinuate that the mere circumstance of your having lost your fortune would prevent me from fulfilling the promise I made you? Mr. Dotts, I regret to find you have so mean an opinion of me. No, sir; the misfortune which has befallen you unites us more closely than ever. Whatever my previous sentiments may have been, nothing shall now prevent me from becoming your wife!

Dotts. (*aside, astounded*) The devil! this isn't what I bargained for at all. (*aloud*) Believe me, my dear madam, this devotion on your part is gratifying in the extreme, but I will never consent to so terrible a sacrifice. My pecuniary resources are now so infinitely inferior to yours, that our marriage is, alas! impossible. (*applies handkerchief to his eyes*)

Mrs. W. Impossible? On the contrary, sir, I shall take the opportunity of proving to the world how little my sex is influenced by sordid considerations.

Dotts. Eh? (*aside*) Mercy on me! this is “out of the frying-pau” with a vengeance! What a fascinating dog I must be! We've been too clever for ourselves here. I'll start for town at once, and get my tailor to arrest me, or the infatuated woman will marry me by main force. (*hurriedly*) Consultation with my lawyer—sale of few remaining articles—urgent—unpostponable! (*handkerchief to his eyes*) I—I shall return to bid you farewell. (*Rushes wildly from the room, R.*)

Mrs. W. Poor Mr. Dotts! he has hurried away to conceal his emotion. And so this is the opinion men entertain of women! Here is a devoted lover, who, because he has suddenly lost his fortune, looks upon it as a matter of course that the object of his fervent adoration will reject his suit immediately. No, this must not be—for the honor of my sex, little inclination though I feel for the match, I am now compelled to abide by my promise!

Enter HETHERINGTON, D. F.

Hether. Oh, my dear Mrs. Walsingham, I rushed off in such

a hurry, that I quite forgot to ask Mr. Dotts's friend if he could in any way identify the villains. But you appear agitated — you turn away —

Mrs. W. (agitated) Do you not see that the misfortune which has befallen Mr. Dotts obliges me to fulfil my engagements towards him. Were I to reject him now, the world would say 'twas owing to the change in his fortunes, and I could not bear to be thought so heartless and interested. Therefore forget me — hate me, if you will — I, on my side, will strive to banish all recollection of the past; 'twill be no easy task, but it has now become — my duty!

Exit.

Hether. (alone) Um! — this is pleasant — uncommonly pleasant! So, then, she *must* marry this confounded Dotts! (*angrily*) But I say she shall not do anything of the kind! What's to be done? Am I, because my rival has the good fortune to be utterly ruined, quietly to allow this sacrifice on the part of the only woman I ever loved? No, never! Let me see, now, can I not hit upon some device by which to counteract Dotts's fortunate infelicity? I declare I'd sacrifice everything I possess in the world, rather than not prevent this match. (*musingly*) Let me see, now. (*walks to and fro, cogitating*) I have it! — the plan's expensive, but infallible. My neighbor, Harry Langton, will bear a helping hand, I know. I'll seek him, and put my scheme into execution this very moment.

Exit R. C. D. F.

Enter BROWNE, L., his dress put to rights.

Browne. Well, I certainly may congratulate myself upon having made a splendid lunch; the provisions here are undeniably excellent, the wines choice in the extreme — altogether, I like the locality amazingly. I'll write a piece here — a very long piece, with considerable "intervals" between each act. I wonder how our anti-matrimonial plot has succeeded. Dotts must have had notice to quit by this time — ha, ha, ha! How I astonished them with that little episode of the bread and cheese knife, and the grand combat of five — and, ha, ha, ha! to think that that remarkably sympathetic young fellow is at this moment performing a grand steeple chase across country, after a band of imaginary robbers — phantom highwaymen — ha, ha, ha! But soft, here comes our fascinating hostess.

Enter MRS. WALSHINGHAM, and LAURA, L.

Mrs. W. (to BROWNE) Well, Mr. Browne, I trust you have somewhat recovered from the effects of your terrible adventure.

Browne. (languidly) In a great measure, my dear madam. I am still suffering from a partial dislocation of the left shoulder, and a slight sprain of the right ankle.

Mrs. W. Dear me, how very distressing!

Browne. But I — I certainly am better.

Enter DOTTs, R., with hat and carpet bag.

Dotts. There's an up-train at two — I shall just have time to catch it.

Browne. Holloa, Dotts! you don't mean to say you're going? *(aside)* The "kick out," I see. I rather flatter myself I managed that for him in a most masterly manner.

Dotts. (making signs to BROWNE) Appointment — lawyer — interview with my creditors — fourpence halfpenny in the pound! *(aside, to BROWNE)* She loves me more than ever!

Browne. (surprised) More than ever? Nonsense! Impossible! It's contrary to all established theory.

They converse aside.

Mrs. W. I trust, at any rate, Mr. Dotts, that you will rejoin us as soon as your conference with your legal adviser is over. *(significantly)* Remember what I said to you. Besides *(laughing)*, I shall detain your friend here as hostage.

Browne. (eagerly) A most excellent arrangement. *(tragically)* I, Pythias, swear never to leave these delightful scenes until my friend, Damon, returns. *(aside)* And I sincerely hope Damon won't hurry himself.

Laura. (looking off) Why, here comes Mr. Hetherington, running with all his might.

Browne. (aside) By Jove! our amateur Bow Street Runner. He seems to have had enough of it already.

Enter HETHERINGTON, at back, D. F., running.

Hether. (out of breath) I — I've had such a run for it. *(to Dotts)* I was afraid you would have started before I got back. There's a letter from Mr. Langton, the nearest magistrate; I undertook to deliver it, as it contains intelligence respecting your lost property.

Dotts. } *(simultaneously — starting violently)* The devil it

Browne. } does!!!! *(Dotts takes letter and reads)*

Dotts. (reads) "Sir, one of the miscreants who robbed your friend has just been arrested." *(overcome with amazement)* Astonishing!

Browne. (overcome with amazement) Petrifying!

Dotts. (reading) "The ruffian has confessed everything, and the speedy capture of his associates may now be relied on." *(to BROWNE)* Do you hear that? "The speedy capture of his associates may now be relied on."

Browne. (bewildered) Oh yes, I hear that.

Dotts. Stop a bit — here's more. *(reading)* "A considerable amount in bank-notes has been found upon the malefactor. The sum in question will be restored to you, whenever you think proper to call upon me. Yours obediently, Henry Langton."

(to BROWNE, in utter amazement) Now, what do you say to that?

Browne. (*excessively puzzled*) Bangs everything I ever met with in the wildest melo-drama.

Mrs. W. Well, gentlemen, I'm sure I can't see anything so very extraordinary in the matter. Surely thieves have been caught before now with their booty about them. I should certainly recommend Mr. Dotts to call on Mr. Langton and claim his property without loss of time; although, by the by, I never knew that Mr. Langton was a magistrate before.

Hether. (*confused*) Oh, yes, a—a—a magistrate of recent creation.

Dotts. (*aside, putting his hands in his pockets*) If I hadn't my bank-notes safe in my pocket, I should positively believe that this was all true. (*aside, to BROWNE*) I say, Browne, what do you advise?

Browne. (*aside, to Dotts*) There must be some counterplot at work here—do you pretend to call upon the magistrate, while I institute a cross-examination.

Dotts. (*aside*) Agreed! (*aloud, mournfully*) I fear this news is too good to be true; but, faint as are my hopes, I—I'll go and make my claim forthwith. (*aside, to BROWNE*) You'll find me in a lane at the bottom of the garden. *Exit, D. T.*

Mrs. W. (*aside*) I shall be all anxiety to know the result; for both our sakes—I sincerely trust that he may recover his property. (*aloud*) Come, Laura, let us leave the gentlemen to discuss this terrible affair.

Exeunt MRS. WALSINGHAM, and LAURA, L.

Hether. (*aside, rubbing his hands*) My scheme works well; they haven't the slightest suspicion.

Browne. Mr. Otway Sheridan Browne, you must undermine this counterplot, or the remarkably high opinion you have hitherto entertained of yourself is lost forever. Let me see, now—(*looking suspiciously at HETHERINGTON*) 'twas our worthy friend yonder who so readily undertook to chase my imaginary marauders—'twas he, too, who brought the letter. I have a shrewd suspicion that the clue to the mystery must rest with him. At any rate, I'll try the effect of a courageous counter-assumption.

Hether. Well, Mr. Browne, the consciousness that Mr. Dotts is now on his way to receive a considerable instalment of his property must be very gratifying to you.

Browne. (*coolly*) Gratifying! pooh—pooh!

Hether. Pooh—pooh! May I inquire what you mean by pooh—pooh?

Browne. (*coolly*) Perhaps you prefer fiddle-de-dee!

Hether. (*indignantly*) Fiddle-de-dee, sir!

Browne. Fiddle-de-dee, sir—an expressive ejaculation of Anglo-Saxon origin—its modern equivalent (*significantly*) is—gammon! I mean, sir, that Mr. Dotts is not gone on any such absurd errand!

Hether. Not gone? — why not?

Browne. Why not? now that's a good joke — a very good joke! the idea of your asking me why not! — ha, ha, ha! — now that's very rich.

Hether. (*anxiously*) Once more, sir, permit me to inquire why your friend should not go to claim his property?

Browne. (*aside*) Now, then, for a startler! (*with perfect calmness*) Because, sir, before you arrived with your letter, Mr. Dotts had already received another missive, enclosing the entire amount of which he had been robbed — a — a — and my gingham umbrella!

Hether. (*astounded*) Is it possible?

Browne. Yes! it would appear that the gentlemen who robbed me are incipient offenders — young in crime — and that before they had run a mile, they were simultaneously stricken with such intolerable remorse, that they virtuously resolved upon restoring their ill-gotten gains instantler.

Hether. (*surprised*) How very extraordinary! but if this be the case, why didn't Mr. Dotts say so at once; and why need he start for town in such a desperate hurry?

Browne. (*mysteriously*) A feint, my dear sir, a mere feint — in order to draw off suspicion from the unhappy culprits, who, it appears, are respectable agriculturists belonging to this neighborhood — goaded on to the commission of crime by want, sheer want, sir! Horrible to think of, isn't it?

Hether. Then my letter —

Browne. Deceived nobody — it arrived the day after the fair! Bless your heart, we saw through it at once — magistrate, indeed, ha, ha, ha! Sly dog! (*gives him a dig in the ribs*)

Hether. Well, sir, I see disguise is useless. I may as well confess that my ruse was instigated by my ardent, insuperable attachment for Mrs. Walsingham.

Browne. (*aside*) Ah, ah! it struck me he was rather gone in that quarter!

Hether. Believing Mr. Dotts to be ruined, Mrs. Walsingham considers herself bound to fulfil the promise of marriage she was once so ill-advised as to make him; but I, sir, would have parted with my entire fortune rather than have permitted such a melancholy sacrifice!

Browne. (*aside*) So now the murder's out! By Jove! we've all been playing at cross purposes. I must institute a grand counter-counteracting agency instantler! (*aloud*) My dear sir, I feel for you — your noble devotion touches me to the heart — I place your case in my hands, and I — I — I'll see what I can do for you!

Hether. You will? (*joyfully*) My dear Mr. Browne, accept my heartfelt —

Browne. (*interrupting him*) No thanks — some one approaches — we'll rejoin Dotts, and hold a council of war in some neighboring laue.

Exeunt. D. F.

Enter MRS. WALSINGHAM, L.

Mrs. W. All this is very strange. My gardener assures me that it is utterly impossible that Mr. Browne could have been robbed in the neighboring wood, for he distinctly saw him step out of the train, not a hundred yards from the house, and observed him coolly and collectedly enter by the back garden gate, in a state of perfect preservation! Can the extraordinary adventure with the thieves in the wood be mere fiction? If so, how am I to account for the proposed restitution of property? I'm utterly at a loss to reconcile all this — there's an air of constraint about Laura that's really unaccountable — and as to Mr. Dotts, I must say that, considering the violence of his attachment, he has, ever since his arrival, taken extraordinary pains to keep out of my way.

Enter WILLIAM, a gardener, D. F.

William. If you please, ma'am, here's a book I've just found in the summer-house. *Gives book and exit.*

Mrs. W. (taking it) Tasso! this book does not belong to me. *(looks at title page)* Ah! 'tis Mr. Dotts's — here is his name on the title page. Why, dear me — here is some poetry written in pencil in Mr. Dotts's handwriting — I had no idea Mr. Dotts was a worshipper of the muses. *(reading)* "To Laura." *(surprised)* To Laura!

"O fairer of two sisters fair,
Was ever mortal placed like me?
To Kate, alas! my hand's engaged,
And yet my heart belongs to thee!"

(surprised) Indeed, Mr. Dotts! that's a candid acknowledgment, truly! *(reads)*

"Still 'mid this gloomy state of things,
Of hope there's yet a ray;
One chance of rescue yet remains,
For Browne comes here to-day!"

"For Browne comes here to-day!" As complete a clue to a plot as was ever furnished by the carelessness of a conspirator. So, so, Mr. Dotts, you're in love with my sister, and this episode of robbery and ruin was a little interlude got up to break off the engagement with me. Ha, ha, ha! what a very unnecessary expenditure of ingenuity — and what a deal of trouble these Machiavelian gentlemen might have saved themselves.

Enter LAURA, L.

My quiet, demure little sister, too! Ha, ha, ha!

Laura. My dear Kate, you seem merry! What are you laughing at?

Mrs. W. Oh — nothing — nothing! A trifling discovery I have just made.

Laura. (*aside*) Discovery! Can she suspect?

Mrs. W. (*looking off*) Ah! here come the conspirators, in deep confabulation! Plots appear to be the order of the day — I'll try my hand at a little impersonation! (*sits down, and assumes a dejected attitude*)

Enter DOTTs, HETHERINGTON, and BROWNE, conversing together, with affected gayety, arm-in-arm, D. F.

Browne. (*to DOTTs, as they enter*) My dear fellow, I sincerely congratulate you —

Hether. (*to DOTTs*) A most extraordinary restitution!

Browne. Wonderful!

Mrs. W. (*in a mournful tone*) Well, Mr. Dotts, have you been to claim your property?

Dotts. Yes — oh, yes — it's all right — I've got all my money back — honest fellows, those thieves — haven't lost a halfpenny, have I Browne?

Browne. Not an iota — not a fraction!

Mrs. W. (*mournfully*) Would that I could say the same! (*handkerchief to her eyes*)

Dotts. (*surprised*) You? why, what has happened?

Mrs. W. THEY'VE been here!

Dotts. }

Browne. } They! who?

Hether. }

Mrs. W. The robbers!

All. Robbers!

Mrs. W. (*falteringly*) The neighborhood is evidently infested by a horde of banditti, who are robbing and plundering the whole country round. Just now, on entering my dressing-room, I found that my jewel-case had been broken open, and all my magnificent diamonds stolen, together with papers and title deeds, constituting my entire fortune!

Dotts. }

Hether. } Monstrous.

Browne. Why, Ah Baba's cave was a fool to this neighborhood!

Laura. (*to MRS. WALSINGHAM, surprised*) But, my dear sister —

Mrs. W. (*hysterically*) Ruined — ruined! (*aside, to LAURA*) Not a word! (*aloud — incoherently*) Nursery governess — needlework — almshouses — soup kitchen!

Dotts. (*dismayed*) What an extraordinary coincidence!

Laura. (*aside*) I understand! (*archly*) Very!

Mrs. W. (*with affected emotion*) But in the midst of all my desolation, one comfort still remains to me; it is the conviction that no change of circumstance — no loss of fortune, can ever diminish the ardent affection of my faithful Peregrine!

Dotts. (*starting violently*) Bless my soul!

Mrs. W. (*continuing*) His noble pride led him to refuse my hand because his resources were not equal to mine. How gladly will he claim it now that our situations are so suddenly reversed.

Dotts. There's no help for it!

Mrs. W. (*extending her hand towards Dotts*) Take it, sir, 'tis yours!

Dotts. (*ruefully*) Metaphorically speaking, I'm done — Browne!

Hether. (*rushing hastily between them*) But, my dear madam, it will never do to allow things to take their course in this quiet manner. (*going*) I'll hasten to inform the police.

Mrs. W. (*resuming her usual manner*) My dear Mr. Hetherington, pray don't think of giving chase to these robbers; you might catch them in the same way you caught the others. A continuation of such expensive captures would ultimately ruin you!

Hether. (*confused*) Eh? I — I don't exactly understand.

Mrs. W. (*with affected gravity*) Besides, 'tis needless, for I much regret to say I have strong reasons for believing that the delinquent is now present.

All. Now present!

Mrs. W. (*with affected solemnity*) Yes, circumstances tend to strengthen me in the conviction that the captain of the banditti, and the perpetrator of all this fearful crime, is no other than the mysterious Mr. Browne.

Browne. (*indignantly*) I, madam! Can you for a moment believe —

Mrs. W. I can believe anything of so ingenious a gentleman. You were clever enough to be robbed and massacred in a wood through which you never passed, may not your supernatural abilities have enabled you to abstract my diamonds without — ha, ha, ha! — without even knowing whether I ever had any?

Browne. (*aside*) Done, by Jupiter! (*to Dotts*) She has discovered our ruse, and paid us off in our own coin. (*voicing to Mrs. Walsingham*) There's no escaping female penetration. I'm quite convinced that if government were only to establish a female police corps, fraud would become totally impossible!

Mrs. W. (*handing book to Dotts*) Mr. Dotts, this book, I think, is your property. Permit me to compliment you on your poetical abilities. The sonnet to Laura is worthy of Petrarch himself. Ha, ha, ha!

Dotts. (*mortified*) I solemnly declare I'll never write another line of poetry as long as I live! (*to Mrs. Walsingham, confused*) My dear madam, how can I express my — my —

Mrs. W. By not expressing it at all, sir! You fancy, now, that I am going to overwhelm you with reproaches, because during your absence from England you have transferred your

affections from me to my sister. My dear Mr. Potts, pray do not distress yourself. Know that I, on my side, sincerely love Mr. Hetherington, whose devotion shall no longer go unrewarded. (*gives HETHERINGTON her hand*)

Dotts. (*astonished*) Then we are both faithless!

Mrs. W. And both happy. And as a proof that I bear no malice, here, sir, is my sister's hand. (*putting LAURA's hand in his*)

Dotts. (*kissing LAURA's hand*) Blissful announcement!

Hether. (*kissing MRS. WALSINGHAM's hand*) Delightful intimation!

Browne. (*triumphantly*) Matrimonial tableau — highly satisfactory denouement! All's well that ends well! I told you I'd manage it for you!

Mrs. W. (*laughing*) But pray have a little more faith in the disinterestedness of woman's love in your next plot, Mr. Browne; but I'll not scold you, for it cannot be denied that we owe our present satisfactory understanding to —

Dotts. (*stepping forward*) My having "WRITTEN TO BROWNE."

LAURA. HETHER. MRS. W. BROWNE. DOTTS.

R.

L.

CURTAIN.

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LENDING A HAND.

A FARCE.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

GILBERT ARTHUR A BECKETT, Esq.



BOSTON:
CHARLES H. SPENCER,
203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1872, Feb. 4.
 Gift of
 Wm. T. Spencer,
 of Boston.
LENDING A HAND.

CHARACTERS.

	<i>Strand Theatre, London, 1866.</i>	<i>Mercantile Hall, 1867.</i>
MR. MATTHEW MUDDLES.	Mr. Turner.	Mr. J. T. Hazelton.
FELIX FLASHPAN, ESQ. . . .	Mr. W. Belford.	Mr. Ferd. Converse.
JEREMY	Mr. L. Fredericks.	Mr. G. F. Bowman.
MRS. LUCRETIA PIPECLAY	Miss M. Simpson.	Lucetta Cambridge.
LYDIA	Miss Fanny Hughes.	Miss Fanny L. Miles.

COSTUMES OF THE DAY.

LENDING A HAND.

SCENE. — *A Room. Window, c. ; door in L. flat ; door in R. ; two doors, L. ; fireplace, R. 1 E. ; sofa and table, R. ; table and chair, L. ; chairs ; pictures on walls ; other furniture as suited to first floor furnished apartments.*

On the rising of the curtain, MUDDLES is discovered in his shirt sleeves, going through a series of calisthenic exercises with clubs, dumb-bells, &c. — he is in a very fatigued condition, stopping to take breath continually, and scarcely able to keep the work up. Enter JEREMY, hurriedly, L. 2 E.

Jeremy. Hi, sir ! please, sir ! stop, sir ! your three quarters is up, sir. *(approaches, and takes dumb-bells from him.)*

Muddles. *(dropping club close to JEREMY, who jumps out of the way.)* Oh ! it's up, is it ? *(rubbing himself.)* Three quarters of an hour ? *(coming down stiffly.)* Why, I feel as if I'd been at it all my life.

Jeremy. *(giving MUDDLES his coat.)* Much pain, sir ?

Muddles. Pain ? Oh, dear, no — only the usual thing — general dislocation ! *(putting on his coat.)* There, never mind that ; but tell me, have you got any news for me ? Anything stirring in the neighborhood — eh ?

Jeremy. Nothing.

Muddles. Not any mishap ?

Jeremy. Not as I've heard say of.

Muddles. Not even a shadow of an accident ?

Jeremy. Not a atom.

Muddles. And the people — next door — opposite — anywhere — haven't they had even a chimney on fire ?

Jeremy. Lor' no, sir !

Muddles. No ? then out of these apartments — out of this horrid neighborhood I move forthwith !

Jeremy. What ? because the chimbleys won't burst into blazes !

Muddles. *(walking to and fro excitedly.)* No — no — no ! you know nothing about it — nothing — nothing !

Jeremy. I know you're going to be married next week, sir, and that's something, isn't it ?

Muddles. *(stopping short.)* Something ! Yes, Jeremy, it is something ; but what do you know of the human heart ? *(collars JEREMY, and shakes him.)* Ah ! What do you know ? for, pray, whom am I going to marry ?

Jeremy. (disengaging himself.) Don't, sir; I ain't a dumb-bell! Why, Mrs. Captain Lucretia Pipeclay, of course.

Muddles. Exactly; relict of old Pipeclay of the 150th. So that when I go to offer my hand — my heart — she hesitates — falters — becomes — becomes —

Jeremy. (suggesting.) Promiscuous?

Muddles. No — foggy, decidedly foggy, Jeremy; for she says to me, "Mr. Muddles, my dear sir, I appreciate the honor you do me in the offer you thus make of your hand — your heart; but you see, one ought to reflect before one gives one's self for life to a man that — to a man whom — to — to — you understand — to a man — in fact —"

Jeremy. How very promiscuous!

Muddles. Not at all — not at all; clear as jelly! She is the wife of a defunct military man. Shall his laurel-crowned widow change the proud name of Pipeclay for the illustrious, though more euphonious, one of Muddles? Never — until, like him, I distinguish myself — the town must ring with the name of Muddles! (*walking up and down excitedly.*) Bring me the dumb-bells! (*JEREMY gives them.*) Let me exercise my muscles, to give me strength, if not courage, for some daring exploit.

Jeremy. Had not you better have your breakfast first, sir?

Muddles. Breakfast! what's breakfast without a reputation? I don't ask for muffins — give me fame. Ah! that I had somebody to rescue, anybody to thrash! (*squares up in boxing attitudes at JEREMY, who recedes as he advances.*)

Jeremy. Couldn't you manage a bit of fame, sir, more quietly now?

Muddles. Quietly! What — do you think nothing is to come of all my gymnastics? Have I been dislocating every joint in my body, taking swimming lessons, swallowing five gallons of water a day, getting the ague twice a week, practising the noble art, (*makes a few boxing postures.*) till my head has got knocked out of the straight for life — have I been doing all this for nothing? Not a bit of it. (*again squares up to JEREMY, with previous business.*) There — what do you think of that?

Jeremy. (getting out of the way.) Capital — first-rate — but what's going to come of it all, sir?

Muddles. What's going to come of it? Wait till I get my opportunity — something heroic to be done — somebody to rescue — anything to cut a dash over. Why have I stood for hours in the most inconvenient part of Fleet Street, except to drag some unfortunate wretch from under an injudicious cart wheel, and immortalize myself? Why have I hung about the Thames Embankment till warned off by the police — why? — except to plunge in after any misguided individual who should either tumble, or purposely precipitate himself into the roaring and nasty stream beneath? Have I not now taken these apartments at Putney, in full view of the river, solely that I may be on the spot should some poor devil indulge in a *felo-de-se*? (*walks to window at back.*)

Jeremy. Now I never! Lor, sir! the public's too happy down this way — and then they might do it shabbily — in the evening; after all —

Muddles. True — quite true. Oh! that I could meet with somebody

disgusted with his existence. (*looking at JEREMY.*) You, for instance: are not you miserable, wretched — don't you wish to put an end to it?

Jeremy. Me, sir!

Muddles. Ha! ha! I see it all — you are — (*shaking his hand warmly.*) We'll go together! (*seizes hold of him as if to walk off.*)

Jeremy. Why, sir, I was never happier in my life.

Muddles. (*letting him go.*) Never happier! just so — that's what comes of treating one's servants too well. (*walks towards window.*) They won't even drown themselves when you want them to. (*looks out and starts.*) Ha! hulloah! hi!

Jeremy. What, sir — who, sir? (*going to window.*)

Muddles. There he goes — there, along the bank!

Jeremy. What bank?

Muddles. Look — now — yes — no — yes — by jingo! yes, he's in! Hooray, hooray, hooray! (*rushes wildly out through c. door at back.*)

Jeremy. (*going to window, and looking out.*) Well, I'm sure, master is going it. Poor gentleman, I really think he must be just a little — (*taps his head with his finger.*)

Enter MRS. PIPECLAY, L. 1 B.

Mrs. Pipeclay. (*looks round the room, and approaches cautiously.*) There's no one here?

Jeremy. Ah! it's you, ma'am.

Mrs. P. Yes — and have you done what I told you?

Jeremy. Everything, ma'am.

Mrs. P. You have watched all his movements?

Jeremy. Rather.

Mrs. P. You have got all his letters?

Jeremy. All, ma'am, and two over.

Mrs. P. You can tell me everybody he has seen?

Jeremy. All down on a slate like a long distraction sum.

Mrs. P. And no woman's foot has crossed his threshold?

Jeremy. No foot, ma'am, nor no female; and as you occupies the floor above, ma'am, and as I'm generally with the umbrellas in the hall —

Mrs. P. Exactly — you see, Jeremy, I've paid pretty dearly for confiding too much in men; my first husband often deceived me.

Jeremy. Yes, ma'am, them milingtary gents —

Mrs. P. (*interrupting him.*) There, there, yes, I know; but it is about your master I am speaking now. As soon as Mr. Muddles aspired to be my husband, naturally I felt it my duty to suspect all his actions — yes, the most innocent.

Jeremy. Well, ma'am, I'm sure master's are all innocent; he couldn't hurt a lamb.

Mrs. P. Ah! yes — but I never trust to appearances, and if I thought Mr. Muddles had formed the slightest attachment, I would — yes, I would murder him, perhaps, but marry him — never!

Jeremy. Would you indeed, ma'am? Well, you needn't worrit yourself about him; he's as artless as a two-year old.

Mrs. P. Ah, well — but in the meantime we must keep up our watching; I am determined not to give him my hand until I am quite certain of his fidelity.

Jeremy. (starting.) Goodness, ma'am! I hear his step on the stairs.

Mrs. P. If he see me here, all is lost.

Jeremy. Yes; and while I've been talking to you, his chop must have been done into hardbake.

Muddles. (outside.) Jeremy! Jeremy!

Mrs. P. (leaving the room.) Now, remember — do not relax your watch.

Jeremy. No fear, ma'am. Hoh! here is master.

[*Exeunt JEREMY, door in flat, and MRS. PIPECLAY, L. 1 B. — she puts her finger to her mouth to express silence as she retires.*]

Enter MUDDLES and JEREMY, door in flat, carrying FLASHPAN — they place him on the sofa.

Muddles. At last — here he is — rescued — saved — preserved by me! No humbug! (*pulling at FLASHPAN.*) Hulloah! you, sir — no reply. (*takes his hand.*) Cold as ice. (*lets his hand drop again.*) Dear me! hulloah, my friend, wake up. (*takes his hand, and slaps it.*) No movement! dear me, dear me! what will do him good? Ha! the fire, to be sure. Dry him — dry him — that's the thing. (*kneels down at the grate, and blows away vigorously at the bars.*) Won't he be delighted to find himself here? — yes, in the very room of his preserver! Come, that's better. (*gets up, and extends FLASHPAN's feet so that they are near the fire.*) P'raps he'll come round now when his boots begin to dry. I need not tell him I managed it with the boat-hook — what's the use? It might damage the *eclat* of the whole thing; (*rubbing FLASHPAN's hands.*) but he refuses to come to, and come to he must. (*takes a paper, and fans him.*) No — no use. Good gracious! — in the name of Lucretia Pipeclay, my Lucretia Pipeclay, wake up, and acknowledge your preserver! You won't — then this is my last hope. (*wheels the sofa towards the fire, so as FLASHPAN's feet touch the grate.*)

Flash. (hastily drawing up his legs.) Hi! hulloah! — why the water is red hot!

Muddles. (standing over him, behind the sofa.) His senses are returning. The remedy succeeds. (*pushing the sofa still nearer to the fire.*) The heat restores him.

Flash. (drawing up his legs still farther.) Hi! there — turn it off. (*feeling himself.*) Hulloah! what's this — where am I? I ought to be at the bottom of the Thames. (*sits up.*) What! furniture — a fire-place! Ah! I see it all — some one has pulled me out.

Muddles. (aside.) He longs to throw himself into my arms.

Flash. My usual luck — saved again! I should like to know who's dared to try it on this time?

Muddles. Who? Why me — Muddles! (*comes forward.*)

Flash. (looking at him in surprise.) Who's "me — Muddles?" What have you done?

Muddles. What have I done? Why, risked my life — saved you from a damp and uncomfortable termination. Behold your preserver! (*approaches him.*)

FLASH. (drawing back.) Behold your gammon! What right have you to meddle with what doesn't concern you, Puddles?

Muddles. Muddles, sir — Muddles!

Flash. Muddles or Puddles, whichever you like. Life-preserving Muddles! what do you mean by it? Are you aware, sir, that you have seriously interfered with the liberty of the subject?

Muddles. Is this the way you throw yourself into the arms of your Preserver?

Flash. (*making for the door.*) Out of my way — let me pass.

Muddles. (*running after him.*) Hulloah! where are you going?

Flash. Going — where I came from; and don't let me find you hanging about again, that's all. (*makes another move to depart.*)

Muddles. (*getting in his way.*) That's all! Sir, I forbid it. (*both come down a little.*) The idea! I, too, who to save you plunged into thirty-five feet of water. (*aside.*) With a boat hook.

Flash. (*very coldly.*) Very well — let us look at the matter like philosophers. Now, sir, survey me. Do you suppose that an individual, who is not a fool, would take a perfectly cold bath under the centre arch of Putney Bridge, without being actuated by very sound and serious motives?

Muddles. Excuse me; but I happen to be actuated by motives not less sound and serious, in preventing you from enjoying a perfectly cold bath under the centre arch of Putney Bridge.

Flash. Granted; and now that you have pulled me out, what do you mean to do with me?

Muddles. To restore you to the society of which you are doubtless an ornament.

Flash. Well, and then?

Muddles. And then — well, that's all.

Flash. Thank you — good morning, Puddles. (*makes a movement as if to depart.*) I shall return to my cold bath.

Muddles. (*again running after him to stop him.*) No — no — more than that; there's more than that! My reputation — my marriage. (*brings him down again.*) Sir, you do not stir from here, if I have to bolt you in.

Flash. Then am I to understand you have positively made up your mind that I am to live? Be it so; and now briefly to state my terms to you. (*motioning MUDDLES to a seat.*) Have the goodness to take a chair.

Muddles. (*seats himself.*) Ask me to take a chair in my own house!

Flash. (*bowing.*) Felix Flashpan, Esquire, Artist. Before him a tremendous future; but for the moment involved in an extremely uncomfortable present.

Muddles. What? You don't mean to say I've rescued an R. A.?

Flash. No, Muddles, not an R. A. — quite the contrary — an artist.

Muddles. Then why, instead of exposing your life, don't you expose your pictures?

Flash. Why not? You know the Tottenham Court Road?

Muddles. Well?

Flash. The seventh turning on the left?

Muddles. Yes.

Flash. Number one hundred and thirty-nine — a marine store dealer's?

Muddles. Yes.

Flash. Then, in the left hand window, you have recognized a can-

vaa, nine feet by fifteen; subject, "Midnight at Gravesend"—you remember it?

Muddles. Well, I can't say that I do.

Flash. It's mine!

Muddles. You don't say so!

Flash. Yes, mine—refused by a jealous clique! They dared not let it astonish the world in Trafalgar Square—I have had my revenge—it astonishes the Tottenham Court Road instead!

Muddles. But why was such an admirably conceived work refused?

Flash. Why? Haven't we all our vocations, Muddles? And isn't it mine to be refused? I take furnished apartments—rent them of a well-to-do, respectable old ruffian, who has an angel for a daughter in the haberdashery line, twenty-seven round the corner—regardless of the haberdashery line, I love the angel! I ask the well-to-do ruffian's consent—he refuses! I owe him, moreover, twelve months' rent—I ask him to wait another six—

Muddles. He refuses—?

Flash. He does! I beg him to take part of it out in damaged poppy oil.

Muddles. And he refuses that?

Flash. Right again—he does! Then, almost at the same moment, I am wanted down stairs: two summonses, three sheriff's officers, and a writ await me in the hall! I ask them to come up and talk about it quietly over a cup of tea—

Muddles. (rising.) And they refuse again!

Flash. Exactly. So, as my creditors determine on giving me a run for it, off we all start—I take an easy lead till we come to the bridge—I am hemmed in—three on one side, three on the other! A bright idea flashes over me—the river, that is not in the habit of refusing anything—I elude my pursuers—promise the toll man a halfpenny next time—make one final rush, then the fatal plunge—you know the rest. Even the inoffensive existence I seek in a retired hole at the bottom is refused me! You—yes, you interfere with my arrangements, and drag me out.

Muddles. Well, thanks to my presence of mind—(aside.) and the boat hook—(aloud.) you are once again on terra firma; and now, my friend, I will bid you good by. Mind you look me up now and then; some day I may want your assistance, but for the present solemnly promise me that you will never again—

Flash. (interrupting him.) Oh! I see, you don't understand my terms at all. You must lodge me here.

Muddles. (staggered.) What?

Flash. Of course. Didn't I explain to you that a return to my own apartments was impossible? Moreover, you'll have to settle with my creditors.

Muddles. Settle with—

Flash. Exactly. I don't think they'll stand any more humbugging.

Muddles. Stand any more humbugging! How am I to stand all this?

Flash. Very sorry for you; but it's entirely your own fault. If you have determined that I am to live, it's clearly your business to render my life endurable.

Muddles. Ah! I never looked at the matter in that light before.

Flash. Come, hadn't you better go and see about my room? That done, you'll have to manage me an interview with the respectable ruffian, and there's no time to be lost. By-the-bye, I have always talked to him about a rich old uncle of mine, who is going to settle my little matters for me — you understand! quite a fiction, of course; then, you see, I owe him twelve months' arrears.

Muddles. Yes, but I don't owe him twelve months' arrears.

Flash. Well, not exactly; but we'll talk that over later — but tell me what time do you lunch?

Muddles. (angrily.) What time do I — Well, I'm sure! sometimes at one, sometimes at twelve, sometimes at one hour, sometimes at another — at all hours.

Flash. Oh, that won't do for me! I must have my meals quite regularly.

Muddles. (aside.) This fellow is a swindler — Oh, if he were not the evidence of my exploit, wouldn't I —!

Flash. There are several other little things you'll have to alter, I fancy. *(looking about him.)* But come, where's my bedroom? I want to change my things.

Muddles. What here, on my premises?

Flash. Can't you see mine are soaked? what's the good of assisting me in a state of suffocation, and then allowing me to contract congestion of the lungs? *(he is about to exit by door, L.)* I'll come back.

Muddles. (stopping him.) No, no, not there! I'll see to it myself first! I'll put out some things for you. *(aside.)* The worst I've got.

Flash. Don't talk about it, but look sharp; I'm shivering already. *(muzzes.)*

Muddles. There, there, wait a moment. *(aside.)* And this comes of being heroic! but I'll never do anything courageous again! no, never! *[Exit, door, R. 2 E.]*

Enter JEREMY, door L. 2 E., with a small luncheon tray — he places it on the small table, which he moves into the centre of the room.

Jeremy. (without looking up.) There, sir — there's your lunch.

Flash. (taking up the table, and placing it by the sofa, R.) Ah! that's considerate, at all events. Thank you.

Jeremy. Do you know you've got hold of master's lunch?

Flash. (eating.) And do you know — what-is-your-name? — I never allow my servants to talk loud — so — be quiet.

Jeremy. But I'm not your servant. Mr. Muddles is my master, and a good one he is too.

Flash. (helping himself.) He's got a precious ugly name — Puddles! *(takes a mouthful.)* Eh! the next time you send up my chop, see that it isn't cooking three quarters of an hour — do you hear?

Jeremy. Pray, what right have you to give orders here?

Flash. What right? Why, I'm in the house of the man to whom I owe my life.

Jeremy. The man to whom you owes your life! You don't mean to say that master's your father?

Flash. Well, something of the sort.

Jeremy. Why, there's nothing very extraordinary in that, is there? I suppose there are a select few in London much in the same boat.

Flash. But there, that will do; you'll go at once to —

Jeremy. You'll excuse me, but I've no orders —

Flash. Oh, you haven't, haven't you? (*rising and leading him to the front by his collar.*) You want your month, do you? No. Very well; run at once round the corner — number twenty-seven — the haberdasher's — you know it; and tell them to send round immediately two dozen — neck-ties, for Mr. Muddles, do you see? Now, off with you — fly!

Jeremy. (*going — aside.*) What on earth can master want with two dozen neck-ties?

Flash. Eh! still there? — by Jove! (*makes a run at him — JEREMY exits hurriedly by door in flat.*) Capital! Lydia will come herself with my extensive order; nothing could be better, and I shall myself do the honors in my own apartments. (*looking at the room.*) But come, that paper is atrocious — makes me melancholy to look at it. Was ever such taste? Oh! I can't stand it. (*tears some of the paper off the wall.*)

Re-enter MUDDLES.

Muddles. Your things are ready — why, he is actually flaying my walls! Hulloah there, what are you about?

Flash. (*continuing.*) Merely arranging our room — it must all come down — every bit of it.

Muddles. Why, it cost three farthings a yard.

Flash. (*approaching him gravely.*) Muddles, if we are to get on together, I must have what is cheerful about me. We must have a more lively color — say, emerald green! Then look at your pictures — a set of public-house sign-boards — down with them at once. (*is about to take one down.*)

Muddles. (*stopping him.*) Come, I won't stand this — I won't have any one touch my pictures.

Flash. Nonsense, Muddles, nonsense; why, I'm to paint you a lot of new ones, we agreed upon it. But my chop is getting cold. (*goes to table, R.*)

Muddles. What? eating my lunch! You've taken my lunch.

Flash. Oh! I didn't offer you any — I was just trying it.

Muddles. Am I on my head or my heels?

Flash. Quite immaterial, Muddles — quite immaterial. But what about my clothes?

Muddles. Ah! (*pointing to door, L.*) In there you'll find all you want put out for you on my bed — a pair of blue tights, and a tweed jacket.

Flash. Thanks, old boy, thanks. (*moving towards door; R. — sneezes.*) But what do you keep talking for? I shall be catching a fever next, and then you'll have the doctor's bill to pay. Which room did you say? ah! that's it, of course. (*entering.*) Upon my word, old Muddles, you're not a bad fellow after all, and I'm not sorry I've tumbled across you — ta-ta, old boy, shall be back directly. [*Exit by door, R.*]

Muddles. At last! free for a few moments — let me breathe! What a disgusting type of man; and this comes of fishing for human beings

on Putney Bridge — no matter, he must acknowledge his preserver before Lucretia; my brow will then be invested with the hero's laurel. Courage will flash from my eye, every manly virtue stamp itself upon my noble form. Yes, Lucretia will be mine! (*wipes his forehead, and seats himself as if exhausted.*) But I renounce heroism — yes, forever! I'll retire into my early cowardice; it isn't quite so stylish, but it's more comfortable.

Enter LYDIA, door in flat, with haberdasher's box.

Lydia. I beg your pardon — Mr. Muddles?

Muddles. (*rising — aside.*) A woman! (*aloud.*) Yes, young female, I'm Mr. Muddles; and, pray, what do you want with me?

Lydia. The neck-ties, sir.

Muddles. Neck-ties? what neck-ties?

Lydia. Those you have just ordered, sir; I've brought them — you'll find them all right — three dozen.

Muddles. Three dozen! What, do you think I'm going to hang myself? Three dozen! why I only buy one every five years, and then I turn it.

Lydia. Well, it's very strange, for I'm sure there's no mistake about the address — twenty-three, Paradise Row — first floor, Mr. Muddles — rather a stoutish gent, with red hair.

Muddles. Rather stoutish — red hair — Paradise Row — yes, it must be me; but who on earth has made me a present of three dozen —

Enter FLASHPAN from door in R. — he has on a blue coat with brass buttons, and a conspicuous cravat.

Flash. Who? why, can't you guess?

Lydia. Why, if it isn't Mr. Flashpan!

Muddles. Then he knows this young commercial female.

Flash. (*to MUDDLES.*) That's the girl I told you of — my haberdashery angel; I wanted to have a chat with her.

Muddles. And so you sent for her, and want to have your chat out in my lodgings?

Flash. Of course I do. (*crosses to c.*)

Muddles. And can I believe my senses? Yes, you have — you've got on my marriage coat!

Flash. Ah! you're going to marry, are you?

Muddles. Yes — yes — but I put out your clothes for you: a pair of blue tights, and a tweed jacket.

Flash. Blue tights and a tweed jacket to appear in before an angel! Oh, Muddles, you don't know much about the female heart.

Muddles. Here, come, I can't stand this — there's a limit to everything. You can't take all my property, wear my new best coat, on the strength of owing me your life.

Lydia. Ah! he owes his life to you? I see it all — you are his uncle!

Muddles. Me his uncle! which uncle? what uncle?

Flash. (*aside to MUDDLES.*) Oh, you know — the one we invented.

Lydia. The uncle he has so often told us of.

Flash. (aloud.) Yes, the good old fellow; the capital old fellow I thought was dead. (*shaking MUDDLES by the hand.*) But I've found him again — I've found him.

Muddles. What next? Buried — resuscitated, and then furnished with nephews and nieces!

Lydia. (shaking his hand — crosses to c.) Oh! how happy we are to have found you at last! Papa, too, will be so glad, and will send you your poor nephew's bill at once.

Muddles. (confused.) What! have I got a nephew who owes a bill?

Flash. No, nothing to talk of — the twelve months' rent, you know, and a trifle or two of that kind. Oh, a mere nothing! (*moves across to LYDIA.*)

Enter JEREMY, L. 1 E., in great excitement — he comes down hurriedly to MUDDLES.

Jeremy. Goodness, sir, there'll be the mischief to pay! Mrs. Pipeclay's on the stairs; she saw a young woman come in here, sir; she's in a tremendous rampaging state — is coming up — I couldn't gammon her no ways!

Muddles. (bewildered.) What? Coming up! Mercy on me! It wanted but this — suspected of seeing young females on the sly! Oh! Muddles, Muddles! (*to LYDIA, throwing up his arms to hurry her off.*) Fly, young woman, fly — you and your neck-ties will be the ruin of me! Fly!

Jeremy. But Mrs. Pipeclay is outside — it's too late!

Muddles. Too late! (*with an effort, calling out.*) Do you hear, young woman? you will tell your master I want blue ties; these are black — go, and bring me some blue — sky blue! (*sinks in a chair, then low to JEREMY.*) Quick! for goodness' sake, show her out. (*JEREMY and LYDIA retire by the door in flat.*)

Enter MRS. PIPECLAY, L. 1 E., hurriedly.

Mrs. P. Mr. Muddles, some one has been with you here; I have discovered all!

Flash. (R.) A good-looking woman, by Jove!

Muddles. (c.) Discovered all, madam! this gentleman has been my only visitor this morning.

Mrs. P. (L.) Spare yourself any falsehoods, sir — I saw a young woman, sir, stopping at your very door.

Muddles. At my door! impossible, Mrs. Pipeclay! (*aside.*) How shall I get out of this?

Flash. Come, come, if one has been here, far the best to say so straight out — don't quibble, Muddles, don't quibble.

Mrs. P. Ah! I was sure of it, the wretch!

Muddles. No, no, don't give it a thought, Mrs. P. — Lucretia, I beg you; it was not a woman!

Flash. Not a woman! What on earth was it, then?

Muddles. (aside to him.) For mercy's sake, hold your tongue!

Mrs. P. Enough; I am deceived, betrayed! Mr. Muddles, you are not a man, you are a monster! (*she is about to depart.*)

Muddles. (staying her.) Stay, Lucretia, I am innocent! Let me at least explain — I confess, then, that some one has been here — yes, but only a young person, of whom I know nothing, with some hosiery.

Mrs. P. What do you mean by hosiery, sir?

Flash. (laughing.) Hosiery, indeed — capital!

Mrs. P. (to FLASHPAN.) You laugh, sir; then I am still the victim of a heartless deception?

Muddles. Oh! this is too bad — not believed when I swear!

Flash. There, spare yourself any oaths, old fellow; it's too clear. Hosiery, indeed! *(laughs.)*

Muddles. Oh! and this is my reward. To think that I should have warmed up this serpent, this boa constrictor! Once more, madam, I tell you I am innocent, and that this man, this — this —

Mrs. P. (crossing to c.) Do not trouble yourself, sir — I have had too much sad experience not to recognize a gentleman when I see one. *(approaches FLASHPAN.)*

Flash. (r., bowing.) Charming woman! 'pon my word, charming!

Muddles. Him? what, him? a gentleman? a maniac! a fiend in human shape — a fellow who throws himself into the river, to be a curse to anybody who takes the trouble to fish him out.

Mrs. P. Poor young man! and you, sir, insult him because he unveils your horrid conduct — shameless monster! Mr. Muddles, sir, I have done with you. Farewell forever! *(to FLASHPAN, who is seated on sofa, laughing.)* And you, sir, pray receive a thousand thanks — I can never sufficiently repay you. *(to MUDDLES.)* Once more, deceiver, farewell. Hosiery, indeed! *[Exit. L. 1 B.]*

Muddles. (following.) Mrs. Pipeclay — Mrs. P. — Lucretia! *(coming down.)* Useless! I am a ruined, miserable man. *(to FLASHPAN.)* And you, sir, monster of my own creation, what do you say now? you have actually shivered my very marriage to atoms.

Flash. (rising.) Look here, Muddles, my boy — I don't mind telling you, now that it's all up with your chance, that pretty widow is the very thing for me — I shall go in for her.

Muddles. What, endeavor to rob me of my intended? what next? what next?

Flash. Well, what of it? Hasn't she done with you?

Muddles. (excited.) Very well, be it so — under my very eyes swallow my chop, wear my coats, tear off my paper, disgrace my room, inherit me as your uncle, do what you like, but Lucretia is mine, sir! *(buttons his coat defiantly.)* And, by jingo, you shan't have her.

Flash. Oh, that's your game, is it, Muddles? You rescue me, and then make me suffer for your selfishness.

Muddles. My selfishness?

Flash. Yes, yours — who asked you to save me? you drag me back into existence, and then rob me of the pleasures which render it supportable. Have you hooked me out from under the middle arch of Putney Bridge merely to torture me? Answer, brutally inclined Muddles, answer.

Muddles. Ha, ha! that's good — know, sir, that I rescued you actuated by the noblest instincts of humanity! you are a living proof of my courage and devotion — yes, and the world shall know it, and Mrs. Pipeclay too.

Flash. I see exactly — You are going to build up a reputation for heroism — that'll never do — I shall stop it.

Muddles. Stop it! How?

Flash. Very simply, Muddles! You pulled me out; I shall merely say you pushed me in.

Muddles. Horrible! accuse me of murder? Here, somebody, save me! (*feeling his head.*) I really think I must be slightly deranged.

Enter JEREMY, hastily, door in flat.

Jeremy. Please, sir, there's three ugly-looking gents down stairs, asking for Mr. Flashpan.

Flash. Ah! the three fellows I mentioned — merely sheriffs' officers, that's all.

Muddles. What? sheriff's officers on my premises?

Flash. You had better settle it at once. Come, out with your check book, or they'll be walking off with your furniture.

Muddles. Walking off with the furniture? it's mine, sir — they can't.

Flash. I beg your pardon, I have no other residence — they will be perfectly justified in considering the furniture as mine. Come, you'd better part.

Muddles. Gammon, sir! arrange with your creditors yourself.

Flash. You won't? Very well, here goes! (*is about to run.*)

Muddles. (*stopping him.*) No, stay — not until you have acknowledged me as your preserver. Go hide yourself, monster as you are — I must keep you for the purposes of evidence. (*falls into a seat.*)

Flash. That's it, Muddles — you can't do without me. If you'd go into quod instead of me, and then you'll be out of the way, you know, it's far the best thing for your nerves — think it over.

Jeremy. This way — in here — quick!

[*Exeunt FLASHPAN and JEREMY, door, R.*]

Muddles. A nice mess this — my prospects blighted, and three sheriffs' officers to satisfy.

Enter LYDIA, with a milliner's large cardboard box, c. door.

And what on earth do you want here again? What is it now?

Lydia. Why, the neck-ties, sir; you sent away the black, and told me to change them for blue — sky blue — and I have brought you twenty-three dozen. (*places box on table.*)

Muddles. (*with forced calmness.*) Importunate and business-like young female, survey me, and say whether I look like a human being in want of three and twenty dozen sky-blue neck-ties! And now answer me, in the name of all my this morning's miseries — do you feel a regard for Flashpan?

Lydia. Oh, he's very passable, indeed! quite a genteel young man in his way.

Muddles. (*seizing hold of her.*) Then marry him — marry him, by all means; I implore you to marry him!

Lydia. Oh! I shouldn't mind it; but then papa won't hear of it — I'm sure he won't.

Muddles. (*earnestly.*) Listen; my happiness is at stake — yes, per-

haps even yours! Marry him for my sake, if not for your own — no, I don't mean that — but — but, the fact is, I want to get rid of him — anyhow — anywhere!

Lydia. But, sir, if it's impossible —

Muddles. Impossible! obdurate young woman, will nothing soften your heart? Behold a miserable wretch before you — have pity on him — marry, and he offers you £400, £500 — anything, only marry.

Lydia. Oh, sir!

Muddles. (*kneels to her.*) Behold me at your feet, imploring you to close the business — once more I offer you the £400 — one word — one word! (*takes her hand.*)

Enter MRS. PIPECLAY, door, L. 1 E.

Mrs. P. Ah! was I deceived? This, then, is your hosiery, is it, Mr. Muddles?

Muddles. (*rises.*) On my honor —

Mrs. P. (*immediately cutting him short.*) False, sir, all false; and you, young woman! Why! can I believe my eyes? you don't even blush!

Lydia. Me, ma'am? Why, I am to have £400 if —

Mrs. P. If, indeed! to think I should be subject to this indignity. I shall scream. Oh, I'm going to faint! Ah! (*falls on to the sofa — LYDIA runs to her assistance.*)

Muddles. I thought so — hysterics to add to my amusement. Here, help! vinegar! police! help! cold water! (*pulls bell violently.*)

Enter FLASHPAN, from door, E. — he looks in cautiously at first.

Flash. Are they gone yet?

Mrs. P. Ah, Mr. Flashpan, is it you? so much the better.

Muddles. Yes, indeed, so much the better; for you can now explain and justify my conduct to Mrs. Pipeclay, who, owing to your vagaries, sir, treats me as if I were a rhinoceros.

Flash. Does she really? Now I should have thought a chimpanzee more about it.

Mrs. P. Would you believe it? I found the perfidious Mr. Muddles on his knees at the feet of this young person.

Flash. On his knees? Hulloah! Perfidious Muddles!

Mrs. P. And offering her £400.

Flash. Oh, mercenary Muddles.

Mrs. P. Base deceiver!

Flash. Too bad of you, Muddles.

Mrs. P. Enticing a young person here — deluding her — shame, sir, shame!

Lydia. (*beginning to cry.*) Was he deluding me all the time? The cruel monster! the wretch!

Muddles. Good gracious! I a deceiver — a deluder! It's false! false! (*points to FLASHPAN.*) It was he —

Flash. (*interrupting him.*) Nothing of the kind, and you know it. I appeal to you, madam; didn't he tell you I wished to terminate my existence — that something had driven me to despair?

Mrs. P. He did.

Muddles. I know I did, sir — you told me so yourself.

Flash. That something was a woman!

All. A woman?

Flash. Yes, madam, and as the moment has now arrived for an avowal, know, that that woman was yourself —

Muddles. What, Lucretia? never! it's false! don't believe him!

Flash. Yes, it was you — you whom I now ask, if indeed my sentiments are reciprocated, to —

Mrs. P. You are right — I'll be revenged — I understand you, sir! (*approaching him.*) You ask my hand; take it — it is yours!

Muddles. (*falling into chair.*) Fetch me some arsenic, somebody! take me to a lunatic asylum! bury me alive! I'm a blighted being!

Lydia. (*crying, addressing MUDDLES.*) And all this is your doing, you cruel, heartless, middle-aged villain, you — (*falls into a chair.*)

Muddles. (*rising up suddenly, and feeling his head.*) Yes, this is my own head. (*kicks over a chair.*) Yes, that's certainly a chair — no, it's no dream! (*solemnly.*) Then I am determined! Mrs. Pipeclay — madam — (*striking an attitude.*) behold your work; survey me, and scrutinize the remnants of a disorganized wreck! But think you that I will remain to witness the demolition of my proudest hopes? never, Mrs. P. — never! (*excitedly.*) No, henceforth the cold uncomfortable river is my home — and if sometimes in wet weather you think of your Muddles floating silently between Battersea and Lambeth, remember, Lucretia, it was you that drove him to seek beneath the muddy waves a domestic peace denied him forever in his lodgings! (*rushes wildly out by door, L., in flat.*)

Mrs. P. Oh, dear, what dreadful words! Stop him — save him — I relent — stop him!

Flash. (*looking from window.*) Well, he's putting on the steam. Where on earth is he running to?

Mrs. P. Oh, sir, follow him — stop him! His behavior has been dreadful; but I never meant this — bring him back — oh! bring him back!

Flash. What? when we've taken all this trouble to get rid of him?

Lydia. Where has he gone?

Enter JEREMY, hurriedly, R. door.

Jeremy. Down the terrace to the river, and he's made for the bridge — run, sir — quick, sir!

Mrs. P. A moment more, and you'll be too late! Oh, run, sir!

Flash. What, hunt old Muddles up again? quite settled about it, eh? Oh, very well then — here goes. (*rushes off by door at back in flat — JEREMY watches from window.*)

Mrs. P. (*addressing LYDIA.*) And how can you stand coolly there as if nothing was the matter, when you have brought all this trouble about?

Lydia. I, madam, brought it all? Why, I don't even know who sent for me.

Mrs. P. You don't know? Then, pray, what was Mr. Muddles saying to you, when I found him at your feet, miss?

Lydia. Why, begging me to marry Mr. Flashpan, to be sure.

Mrs. P. Nonsense!

Lydia. He was though; and I told him papa would never consent, as neither of us had a halfpenny.

Mrs. P. Well?

Lydia. Why, then he offered me five hundred pounds to start with, and remove all obstacles.

Mrs. P. Then he is really innocent — perfectly innocent?

Lydia. I suppose so, ma'am.

Mrs. P. Oh! how cruel I have been — my poor, guiltless Muddles.

Jeremy. Hooray, ma'am! it's all right; he's got master out! (*comes down.*) Here they are. (*runs off, door, &c., in flat.*)

Enter FLASHPAN at back, supporting MUDDLES with same business as at commencement of play — he gets him on the sofa.

Flash. (*pushing sofa near fire.*) Just in time — only just. I'd back Muddles against a Hansom.

Mrs. P. Oh, then he's not got cold — life is still in him — he breathes — say he breathes.

Flash. (*pushes MUDDLES's feet into fire.*) Well, I don't know; but we'll soon try — there, that will refresh him.

Muddles. (*drawing up his legs hastily.*) Hi! hilloah! why, the water is red hot!

Flash. Precisely what I remarked under similar circumstances.

Muddles. (*drawing up legs still further.*) Hi! turn it off! Hulloah, what's this? Where am I? (*sits up.*) Furniture? a fireplace? Ah, I see it all — some one has pulled me out. (*rising and addressing FLASHPAN.*) This must be your doing, evil genius — dreadful monster of my own creation!

Flash. You don't like it? Want to go back, do you, Muddles? Well, come along, we'll go together. (*catches hold of his arm.*)

Mrs. P. Hold! Mr. Muddles does not wish to accompany you; and as it is your duty, sir, to bestow your affections where they are reciprocated, so is it my duty to follow your example. (*gives her hand to MUDDLES.*)

Muddles. What, you consent? (*aside.*) I knew the gymnastics would do it in the long run.

Flash. (*coming over to LYDIA.*) You don't mean to say the governor's softened at last? (*takes her hand.*)

Mrs. P. There, never mind the governor — we'll manage to soften him. What will he say to five hundred pounds?

Flash. Five hundred pounds? why, it's enough to turn him into liquid glue.

Mrs. P. And now, Mr. Muddles, promise me that under any circumstances you will never think of taking a cold bath in twenty-two feet of water again; for, indeed, if Mr. Flashpan here had not lent you a hand —

Muddles. Exactly; then some good has come of pulling him out, after all. Dear me, I thought it was the worst half hour's work I'd ever done in my life; but there, we'll say no more about it.

Flash. Oh, yes, though, but we will. Muddles, you're a hero — I

pronounces you publicly to be a hero. When I was struggling in the muddy deep you saw my danger, rushed to the rescue, and, quick as lightning, divided the foaming billows (*aside to MUDDLES.*) with a boat hook — in a word, you lent me a hand, and I have only returned the compliment; and as these ladies have wisely followed our example, (*takes LYDIA's hand — MUDDLES takes Mrs. PIPECLAY's.*) I have only one thing to ask you — when are you going to splice? When is it going to come off, eh, Muddles?

Muddles. Well, I haven't thought about it.

Flash. Haven't you? then we'll say the ninth — yes, the ninth; that'll suit me capitally; and then, you see, your breakfast and all that sort of thing will do for me. Mind, Muddles, lots of champagne; and you know, old boy, you needn't come unless you like.

Muddles. Needn't come to my own wedding!

Flash. Oh! I forgot. But don't you see you are forgetting too? (*nudges him.*) Can't you say a word for us?

Muddles. Of course — of course! (*coming forward.*) Ladies and gentlemen, I trust — that is —

Flash. (*pushing him aside.*) That won't do. Why can't you say that you intend to get yourself into a mess every night till further notice? and that you hope you'll find plenty of friends over there, who, just for once in a way, won't mind seeing you well out of it, by "LENDING A HAND."

Mrs. PIPECLAY. MUDDLES. FLASHFAN. LYDIA. JEREMY.
R. L.

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[No. 19.]

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A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

JOHN MADDISON MORTON, Esq.

BOSTON:
CHARLES H. SPENCER,
203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1870, Feb. 11.
Gift of
Wm. T. Spencer,
of Boston.
MY PRECIOUS BETSY.

CHARACTERS.

		ADELPHI THEATRE, London, 1850.
MR. BOBTAIL		Mr. Wright.
MR. WAGTAIL		Mr. P. Bedford.
MR. LANGFORD		Mr. Worrell.
SHOPMAN		Mr. Sydney.
MRS. BOBTAIL		Miss E. Harding.
MRS. WAGTAIL		Mrs. F. Matthews.
NANCY MUDDLE		Mrs. Laws.
NURSE		Miss Brooks.

COSTUMES.

BOBTAIL. — Chocolate short frock-coat, velvet collar; white waistcoat, gilt buttons; light blue trowsers with black stripes; light cloth boots; black wig, very high at the top; white apron and sleeves; white flowered silk tie.

WAGTAIL. — Newmarket-cut green coat, gilt buttons; red and white plaid trowsers, fancy striped waistcoat, white cravat, light wig; black dress boots; white hat.

LANGFORD. — Black frock-coat, silk waistcoat, and gray trowsers.

SHOPMAN. — Plain dress, apron and sleeves.

MRS. BOBTAIL. — Morning dress, green silk apron, lace cap with flowers, blue silk tie, lace collar.

MRS. WAGTAIL. — Muslin-de-laine flowered dress; green silk mantilla, trimmed with black lace; green velvet bonnet, with white flowers.

NANCY MUDDLE. — Blue spotted gown, high canvas apron, large cap, red wig, blue stockings, boots.

Time in representation — 55 minutes.

MY PRECIOUS BETSY.

SCENE. — *An Interior. Door, R. C., showing shop behind, with candles, soap, &c.; door, L. 3 E.; cupboard, or store-room, L. C.; a window, R. 3 E.; fire-place, R. 3 E.; tables, R. and L.; lamps on table; sideboard, with glasses, plate, &c.*

MRS. BOBTAIL *discovered at R. window.*

Mrs. B. He doesn't come. This delay is inexplicable.

Nan. (*entering door, R. C.*) Very well, sir; I'll ask missis.

Mrs. B. What's the matter, Nancy?

Nan. Why, please, ma'am, master's been and bought you a grand piano — such a tremendous big one! He said he was determined to have enough for his money. The men have just brought, it, ma'am.

Mrs. B. Well, they can bring it in.

Nan. No, ma'am, they can't! It won't go in at the shop door, or the street door — or the shop window, or the parlor window. They've tried 'em all, ma'am; so master wants to know if he shall change it for a smaller one, or have the side of the house taken down?

Mrs. B. Pshaw!

Nan. I declare it's as good as a play to see master — that it is! I have n't done a bit of work all day long for looking at him. He does seem so happy — and well he may, to have such a blessing! To think of your having such a lump of money left you — and so unexpected, too! Eight thousand one hundred and twenty-five pounds! Master may well call you his *precious* Betsy!

Mrs. B. Once for all, Nancy, be silent!

Nan. Yes, ma'am. (*going*) Oh, please, ma'am, what am I to do with those dreadful mice in your store-room? (*pointing to door, L. C.*) The place swarms with them, ma'am — and they do make such short work with the long sixes!

Mrs. B. You had better speak to your master.

Nan. I have, ma'am, and he told me to get a trap — but, la, madam, you know they be up to trap!

Mrs. B. Then speak to him again.

Nan. Yes, ma'am! (*as she goes out*) Eight thousand one

hundred and — Beg pardon, ma'am — And so unexpected, too!

Exit, door L. 2 E.

Mrs. B. No, unexpected as this accession of wealth has been, I cannot even welcome it while my poor Fanny — my earliest friend and benefactress — remains exposed to so much anxiety, so much misery —

Re-enter NANCY, door, L. 2 E.

Well, what now?

Nan. Please, ma'am, there's a mouse — I mean there's a gentleman below as wishes to see you —

Mrs. B. Who is he?

Nan. Master's landlord, Mr. Langford.

Mrs. B. Oh, show him in, and see that we are not interrupted.

Nan. Yes, ma'am. This way, sir! Mind the steps at the end of the passage, sir — there are eight thousand one hundred and twenty-five of them — I mean —

Enter LANGFORD, door, L. 2 E.

And now to get the trap.

Exit NANCY, L.

Mrs. B. (*watching NANCY off*) Well, what news?

Lang. Not favorable. Our dear invalid is no better.

Mrs. B. Poor little Bobby!

Lang. And to think that I cannot, dare not see him — for Fanny tells me that she is more and more convinced that her father, the alderman's, suspicions have lately been excited. You know his pride of wealth — his harsh and selfish nature — his ambition —

Mrs. B. Nay, when I first discovered your mutual affection, I felt convinced that his consent to your union would never be given.

Lang. That was precisely *our* opinion, consequently we took the liberty of getting married without it; and it is owing to your prudence, my dearest Elizabeth, and to your kind and affectionate devotion to Fanny's interests and happiness, that our marriage has been kept a profound secret for more than a year.

Mrs. B. Surely, were Fanny to confess everything to her father —

Lang. No — for the sake of our little one, we must not risk a disclosure yet.

Enter MRS. WAGTAIL, at door, R. C.

And now I have a favor — a great favor to ask of you, Elizabeth.

Mrs. W. (*at the back*) He calls Mr. Bobtall's Elizabeth, his Elizabeth.

Lang. (*seeing* MRS. WAGTAIL, C. *Aside, to* MRS. BOBTAIL) That babbling next-door neighbor of yours, Mrs. Wagtail —

Mrs. W. (*comes down, c.*) Good morning, Mr. Langford! My dear Mrs. Bobtail, I need not ask how you are — you look quite charming! Don't she look quite charming, sir? But, dear me — how thoughtless of me, to be sure! Perhaps I am in the way. There are occasions where a third person's always in the way. (*going up*)

Lang. Pshaw! As Mr. Bobtail's landlord, I presume I am at liberty to pay my respects to his wife.

Mrs. W. No doubt about it, sir! And as Mr. Wagtail's landlord you're at liberty to pay your respects to *his* wife — but you never do!

Lang. Nay, Mrs. Wagtail — you do me injustice. I am perfectly aware of what is due to you.

Mrs. W. You are perfectly aware what is due to you, sir — and I must say that you are the most *kind* landlord in the world, on quarter days — but, never mind! But now to business — and, in the first place, touching those chimneys that I have so often complained about — there isn't one in the whole house that doesn't smoke, and every hour that I sit in such an atmosphere, sir, does an irreparable injury to my health and my complexion.

Lang. I'll make a point of attending to it to-morrow.

Mrs. W. To-day, sir — to-day! those chimneys are not chimneys to be trifled with. Besides, when Mr. Wagtail comes home, the smoke gets into his throat, and sets him coughing all night long, and that's very unpleasant to both of us — *me* especially! And then that passage of ours — we must have a light in it of some sort or other. Mr. Wagtail has tumbled down the kitchen stairs four times a day on an average for the last eighteen months, and he can't go on wasting his time in that sort of way.

Lang. Is that all?

Mrs. W. Yes, that will do for the present. (*aside*) What a pity I can't think of something else! He sees I suspect something wrong, and he'd do anything I asked him. (*goes up*)

Lang. (*aside to* MRS. BOBTAIL) The favor I was about to ask —

Mrs. B. I guess what it is. You wish me to call at the nurse's, and see your little Bobby. I will do so as soon as Mr. Bobtail goes out.

Lang. A thousand thanks! (*takes her hand*)

Mrs. W. (*aside*) Now it's too bad! — I declare it is! Such a nice, respectable man as Mr. Bobtail, too! So amiable, so good-tempered, so indulgent — in short, so unlike Mr. Wagtail. But I won't allow such goings on! No, it's my duty, as a friend and neighbor, to open Bobtail's eyes, and make him miserable for life. (*goes up, L.*)

Lang. (aside, to Mrs. BOBTAIL) I rely on your friendship—
Farewell, Mrs. Wagtail, your most obedient. *Exit at door, []*

Enter BOBTAIL, from the shop, R. C.

Bob. I repeat, ma'am, you had better provide yourself with soap and candles at some other establishment.

Mrs. B. Why, what's the matter?

Bob. An insane female come all the way from Winchester to complain about my soap and candles! What's soap to me? what's candles? Now I am indifferent to soap and candles!

Mrs. B. Nay, my dear John Anthony, you must not neglect the business.

Bob. My precious Betsy, I'd do anything in the world to oblige you, and my precious Betsy knows it—but as for my taking up a position behind that counter for the rest of my life, for no other earthly object than to serve the population of Southampton and its neighborhood with soap and candles, it's a thing I can't do—your John Anthony *can't* do it, my precious Betsy; I intend to retire from public life!

Mrs. B. What—give up the shop?

Mrs. W. (at the back) Give up the shop?

Bob. Yes; and what's more, I mean in future to concentrate all the energies of my nature to one grand, sublime, and benevolent object—*my own comfort*, and yours, too, my precious Betsy; and to prove it, I have just sent for all the milliners in the town. I didn't happen to know which was the best, so, as I said before, I sent for them all! I am determined you shall be the best dressed woman in Southampton! You shall be stared at in the streets! You shall have a crowd of dirty little boys shouting after you wherever you go! You shall put all your acquaintances' noses out of joint—our next door neighbor's, Mrs. Wagtail's nose, in particular! I wish *you* to extinguish Mrs. Wagtail! In short, I insist on your putting an extinguisher on Mrs. Wagtail for the remainder of Mrs. Wagtail's life!

Mrs. W. (comes down, R.) Thank ye, neighbor!

Bob. Eh? Ha, ha, ha! You thought I didn't see you, eh? but I did, and I am sure you will give my precious Betsy the benefit of your exquisite taste in matters of dress—velvets especially, of which I mean to lay in an enormous stock of the most costly description. *(aside to Mrs. BOBTAIL)* The woman Wagtail's getting savage!

Mrs. B. Nay, John Anthony, surely this is not a time for such frivolous vanities.

Bob. You are quite right, my precious Betsy, you are quite right; after our sad loss—

Mrs. W. Sad loss?

Bob. Yes, an irreparable loss, Mrs. Wagtail. I won't call it an incalculable one, because I can tell to a shilling how much

has brought us. Eight thousand one hundred and twenty-five pounds.

Mrs. W. Retire from business!—velvet gowns!—eight thousand pounds! What does it all mean? We only returned from the Isle of Wight last evening. Oh, we had such a charming sail up the Southampton Water, and Wagtail was so deliciously ill at the time—it was quite a treat to see him! But what has happened?

Mrs. B. I'll explain the matter to Mrs. Wagtail. You have got to be at the lawyer's, and it's getting late.

Bob. True. I'm ready! I'll take off my apron. I've got my cravat on. *Satin*, Mrs. Wagtail—the very best satin—feel it, Mrs. Wagtail! Wagtail wears *cotton*, I believe. I don't remember seeing Wagtail in anything but cotton—ahem!

Mrs. W. Now, then, I'm all impatience—

Mrs. B. I believe you knew the poor dear late Doctor Brown?

Mrs. W. Doctor Brown—that had the little back attic in the house of Alderman Bradshaw, your friend—Miss Fanny's father? Of course I did—the horrid old miser! I recollect going up to his wretched attic once, at Miss Fanny's particular request, with a basin of gruel. I thought I should have fainted.

Mrs. B. And I attended him constantly for eight months—and so did Mary Johnson, Susan Perkins—in short, there were seven of us—and we took it by turns to wait upon the poor old man till we all got married.

Bob. From which time we entirely lost sight of the virtuous Brown, when, to my astonishment, I received a letter the day before yesterday, informing me that the virtuous Brown was no more, and that he had put my Betsy's name down in his last will and testament for eight thousand one hundred and twenty-five pounds! Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. B. Nay, John Anthony—you shouldn't laugh.

Bob. I beg your pardon, my precious Betsy, I ought to laugh. I consider I am paying the virtuous Brown a compliment by laughing; indeed I am not sure that it would not be becoming in me to split my sides—and what's more, I would split my sides I would have split them several times, but that I felt the operation might probably have been attended with some degree of personal inconvenience.

Mrs. W. This must be all a dream!

Bob. Not a bit. I have seen the lawyers, read the will, and so have the others.

Mrs. W. The others?

Bob. Yes. The virtuous Brown divided his property among seven of us. When I got to the lawyers I found six of us—I made the seventh of us! It was a most impressive scene, Mrs. Wagtail. We saluted each other, each with a tear in one of his eyes—imagine seven people, each with seven tears in one of their eyes—I mean, each with a tear in one of—of their seven

eyes — no — you know what I mean — and then, when the first paroxysm of grief was over, the frantic manner in which the whole seven of us began giving the whole seven of us joy!

Mrs. W. Here's Mr. Wagtail.

Enter WAGTAIL, from shop, C.

Wag. Ah, Bobtail, my boy! Mrs. Bobtail, I kiss your hands —

Mrs. W. No, you don't, Constantine!

Bob. Wagtail, I am pleased to see you! (*giving him a finger — then lays hold of the end of WAGTAIL's neckcloth*) Cotton — I said so!

Mrs. B. Now to execute my promise — my promise to poor —
Mr. Langford. *Exit at door, 2 E. L.*

Wag. My dear friend, do you recollect asking me to lend you two pounds ten shillings three weeks ago?

Bob. I do.

Wag. And do you remember what I said on the occasion?

Bob. Perfectly; you said you couldn't.

Wag. And to prove it, I didn't. Now, perhaps, in return, you'll lend me five?

Bob. Fifty, if you like. By the by, do you recollect my asking you to dinner three months ago?

Wag. Can't say I do!

Bob. Then don't say you do, because I didn't. Will you dine with me to day!

Wag. Delighted!

Bob. And Mrs. Wagtail?

Mrs. W. Charmed!

Bob. Can you eat turtle, salmon, venison, or Irish stew?

Wag. Either of the three!

Mrs. W. All three!

Bob. What wine? Champagne, Burgundy, Madeira, Port — or gin-and-water?

Wag. I don't know which I like best.

Mrs. W. No more do I, so suppose we try all?

Bob. Very well. Ask and have — call for anything you like. Good-by, Wagtail! good-by! Ha, ha, ha! *Mrs. W., I kiss your hands! Au revoir.* *Exit at door, L.*

Enter SHOP BOY, C. D.

Shop Boy. Please, sir, will you come and mind the shop?

Bob. (at the door) That for the shop! (*snaps his fingers*)
That for the shop! *Exit L. D.*

Shop Boy. Oh, very well! That for the shop! that for the shop! (*imitating BOBTAIL*) *Exit C. D.*

Wag. Friend Bobtail gives me the idea of a man slightly touched in his *perricranky*.

Mrs. W. I should like to see you touched in yours on the same terms. He's just come in for a fortune!

Wag. A fortune?

Mrs. W. Yes, of eight thousand pounds — bequeathed to his precious Betsy, by — who do you think?

Wag. Some distant relation.

Mrs. W. No relation at all. Doctor Brown!

Wag. Doctor Brown! There — there, Mary Ann Matilda! Didn't I always say, and tell you to persevere in your attentions to that elderly medical practitioner!

Mrs. W. I'm sure if I had had the ghost of an idea that he had anything to leave, I'd have kept on running up stairs to him with basins of gruel till I dropped! Yes, he has divided his property among seven, and Mrs. Bobtail is one of the number.

Wag. A property divided among seven! I have either read or heard of a similar circumstance somewhere or other, and very lately, too. Let me see — however, no matter, I congratulate Mrs. Bobtail, *sincerely* — but I confess, of the two, I had rather it had been Mrs. Wagtail. Now, what's to be done?

Mrs. W. Why, according to present arrangements, the first thing to be done is I am to have an extinguisher *put on me*!

Wag. And who's to do it?

Mrs. W. Mrs. Bobtail. She's to be the best dressed woman in Southampton. She's to wear a velvet gown!

Wag. Then you shall wear two.

Mrs. W. She's to have a crowd of dirty little boys shouting and hooraying after her in the streets. *(sobbing)*

Wag. So shall you! And your little boys shall be *dirtier* than hers! They shall, Anna Matilda, if I spend every shilling I have in the world!

Mrs. W. Spoken like my own Constantine! *Do* spend every shilling you have in the world!

Wag. I will. I haven't got many, so it won't take me long. But, I say, we won't quarrel with these Bobtails.

Mrs. W. No — not before dinner, at any rate. And now I think of it, Constantine, as Mr. Bobtail has so often admired our beautiful dessert service of Dresden china — left to me by my old Aunt Dorothy — suppose we bring it with us — he may offer to purchase it, and we may put our own price upon it.

Wag. Capital idea! So do you run for Aunt Dorothy's china at once, and be sure you don't tumble down and smash it — smash yourself, I mean! *(tenderly to her, as she goes out at c. d.)* A property divided among seven. As I said before, I'm sure I have read about that somewhere or other, in — of course — oh, in the "Southampton Paul Pry" of yesterday. Here it is — *(about to take it out of his pocket)*

Enter MRS. BOBTAIL, L. D.

Mrs. B. Ah! shall I? Yes! (*aloud*) Mr. Wagtail!

Wag. Mrs. Bobtail!

Mrs. B. (*looking mysteriously about her* — *WAGTAIL watching her*) My dear Mr. Wagtail, you have always been our friend — my friend —

Wag. (*aside*) I see it all! Poor Bobtail!

Mrs. B. Listen. My husband has left the house, and I am here alone —

Wag. (*tenderly*) No, no — not alone — (*about to take her hand, she gives him a violent slap — he looks at her with surprise*) My dear Mrs. B. —

Mrs. B. I cannot absent myself! (*to herself, but in a loud voice*) No — it is impossible; for if the alderman were to see me, his suspicions, already excited, would be confirmed.

Wag. (*overhearing*) Alderman! What can she mean by the alderman?

Mrs. B. (*insinuatingly*) You'll not betray me?

Wag. Thus on my — (*about to kneel*)

Mrs. B. Silence! (*to herself, as before*) No time must be lost! Poor dear little Bobby!

Wag. (*overhearing*) Bobby — alderman — Bobby —

Mrs. B. Then you will go instead of me?

Wag. Where?

Mrs. B. Didn't I tell you? (*looks about*) About a mile and a half down the Winchester road, just beyond the turnpike, you will see a cottage — knock at the door — a woman will open it — you will then say, "Mrs. Buttercup, it's all right! I'm in the secret! What news of the invalid, mum?"

Wag. The invalid! Oh, Mr. Buttercup, I suppose?

Mrs. B. No matter. Inquire simply for the invalid, and nothing but the invalid. I pray make haste back, for he is so anxious.

Wag. He? who? Mr. Bobtail?

Mrs. B. No. Oh, yes — of course — that is — Now, make haste! Run every inch of the way there and back again, do!

Wag. I fly, but —

Mrs. B. (*pushing him*) Exactly.

Wag. Before I go —

Mrs. B. Of course! (*pushing WAGTAIL, who starts off at the top of his speed — runs up against BOBTAIL, who enters at C. D., loaded with bonnet boxes all over him*)

Bob. Holloa, here I am — by your leave — by your leave — here I am, my precious Betsy, loaded with bonnets of all sorts, shapes, and sizes! I didn't happen to know which you'd like best, so I thought I might as well have the whole lot! Ha, ha, ha! (*places them down in C.*)

Mrs. B. You are too kind, John Anthony! I will come back directly, and look at them. (*she makes signs to WAGTAIL, and exits, L. D.*)

Wag. (*to BOBTAIL*) By the by, Bobtail, I ought to apologize

for ~~not~~ having congratulated you on the fortune that you have just stepped into.

Bob. That my precious Betsy has just stepped into, you mean.

Wag. True — rather odd, eh?

Bob. Odd!

Wag. Queer — umph!

Bob. Queer — what?

Wag. Why, that old Brown, who was no sort of relation to Mrs. Bobtail, should have left the money to *her*, and not to you. Eh? eh?

Bob. Not at all odd, Mr. Wagtail — neither is it queer, Mr. Wagtail! I never paid Brown any attention — my precious Betsy did! I never took him up a basin of broth, or gruel, or arrow-root, in all my life. Now my precious Betsy was constantly *brothing* him, and *gruelling* him, and *arrow-rooting* him; consequently Brown, very properly, appreciated her kindness and attentions.

Wag. "Kindness," and "attentions!" Oh, yes — of course. (*humming*) Ri tum — tiddy iddy — ri tum!

Bob. What do you mean by "Ri tum — tiddy iddy?" I insist on your explaining instantly your "Ri tum — tiddy iddy!" What do you mean?

Wag. Oh, nothing.

Bob. Nothing, sir! Explain your "Ri tum," sir!

Wag. I say, Bobtail, do you ever see "The Southampton Paul Pry, and Family Inquisitor?"

Bob. No, sir — I abominate all such cheap publications, sir! What right have people to pry into other people's houses and affairs! They know everything that is going on in your house. How would you like to have your interior exposed, sir?

Wag. It's very amusing, for all that. Here's a little anecdote in yesterday's number, for instance, that I'm sure you'll laugh at. (*giving BOBTAIL the paper*) It'll give you an appetite for your dinner. That's where it begins — (*pointing out the place*. At this Mrs. BOBTAIL appears at the door, and, by signs, urges WAGTAIL to go on his errand. He runs off at shop door, c., as she exits at L. D.)

Bob. (*brings forward chair*) All this for one penny, and the portrait of a gentleman into the bargain. I can't imagine how it's done, and, what's more, how it's done I can't imagine. Let me see. (*reads*) "We beg to call our readers' attention to the following facts, which recently occurred in a favorite watering-place not a hundred miles from Southampton." Now there's a ridiculous way of putting it. There are a hundred watering-places not a hundred miles from Southampton. There's Birmingham — Wolverhampton — and Bristol. But, never mind. (*reads*) "It seems that a certain venerable disciple of Esculapius determined at his death to divide his wealth among those of his female friends" — (*Female friends in italics!*) I should

like to know — oh — (*holding paper before his face, and laughing*) — I'm ashamed of myself! As a respectable tallow-chandler, I ought to blush for myself — but I don't — I don't blush in the slightest degree. I feel as if I had suddenly become hardened, reckless tallow-chandler! Ha, ha! (*reads*) "I divide his wealth among those of his female friends to whom he had been most attached during his life. We understand that a certain lawyer's office presented a most amusing scene yesterday, namely, the assembling together of the said ladies' husbands." That's delicious! It must have been a most delicious scene! Comic in the extreme! I'd have given a trifle to have been there! I fancy I see the poor unsuspecting victims! I shall take in this paper! I feel confident that something will be wanting to my worldly felicity if I don't take in this paper! (*reads*) "Namely, the assembling together of the said ladies' husbands — (*laughs*) — to the number of seven" — (*jumping up*) Seven! Why, damn it, there were seven of us — and in a lawyer's office, too! I see it all — I'm one of the poor unsuspecting victims, and my precious Betsy's one of Esculapius's victims and *friends*, in italics! It's a vile, atrocious libel! But there's one thing, nobody of any respectability ever reads this low, vulgar, contemptible publication! Holloa! what's this? (*reads*) "Average weekly sale, eight thousand!" Well, that's pleasant! "We present our readers with a sketch of one of the fortunate husbands." This execrable portrait of one of the fortunate husbands." This execrable portrait of an ill-looking gentleman! Why, it's me — me! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my atrocious Betsy — oh, that precious Brown — I mean, my atrocious Brown! No — I don't know what I mean! (*falling into a chair*)

Enter MRS. WAGTAIL.

Mrs. W. Where can Wagtail be? I saw him just now running down the street, with a degree of velocity that I didn't think him capable of. (*seeing BOBTAIL*) Mr. Bobtail! What's the matter with the man? Mr. Bobtail, I say!

Bob. Ha! (*jumps up and seizes MRS. WAGTAIL*) Wife of Wagtail, look at me! Observe this rolling eye — this quivering frame — this rolling eye, especially — and answer me. You are fond of gossip, you know you are, Mary Ann Matilda — you are partial to scandal — don't deny it. Wife of Wagtail — now tell me — what, what do people say of me? What do they say about my precious Betsy? Speak! Remember you're on your oath, sir — I mean, ma'am —

Mrs. W. What do people say of Mrs. Bobtail? Oh, you mean about her and Mr. Langford?

Bob. Langford! No, Brown!

Mrs. W. I am sure I don't know; but depend upon it there's no more truth in it than what they say about Mr. Langford.

Bob. Langford again! What about Langford? I am rather curious about Langford.

Mrs. W. Well, then, people do say — not that it matters much what people say, for I need not say there are some people who are always saying something — but they do say that Mr. Langford does drop in here *reyther* frequently.

Bob. That doesn't happen to be true, Mrs. Wagtail, for I never see him.

Mrs. W. Oh, of course you don't! That's the joke of the thing.

Bob. Oh, that's the joke, is it?

Mrs. W. Of course! But, after all, what if he does come in when you are gone out, or go out when you come *in*, it may be quite accidental. Only you must allow it looks *reyther* queer. Not that I believe he does anything of the sort, though I certainly did find him here just now alone.

Bob. Ha! Alone?

Mrs. W. Yes, alone with Mrs. Bobtail. But what of that? To be sure, he did run away as soon as he heard you were coming. But then he may have had business elsewhere, though everybody knows he has nothing in the world to do. Still, you'll never be so foolish as to make yourself uncomfortable about it. And as for Mrs. Bobtail — what if she does receive his visits especially? probably he only calls to inquire after the state of her health, though it is notorious to everybody she never had an hour's illness in her life. But, as I said before, what of that? Of course she must be civil to the man — the man's your landlord, and of course it stands to reason that if she behaved rudely to the man, or snubbed the man, why, the man wouldn't have allowed you to owe him him three quarters' rent. But don't let anything I say make you uncomfortable. Depend upon it, there isn't a word of truth in it — though, for my part, I don't believe there ever was a report yet without some truth in it. But, as I before — (*during this, BOBTAIL has worked himself up into a state of frenzy, and at last seizes one of the bonnet boxes, and kicks his foot through it*) Mercy on me, Mr. Bobtail!

Bob. Leave me!

Mrs. W. Oh, lud! I'll go and call Mrs. Bobtail. (*going towards L. D.; stops*) Now I rather think I have put an extinguisher on you, Mr. Bobtail!

Exit door 2 E. L.

Bob. Brown, Langford — Langford, Brown! Now don't let me be rash. Let me reflect quietly and calmly, as becomes a tallow-chandler and a gentleman. (*throws himself into a chair, in which he had placed a bonnet box, with bonnet in it; takes out the bonnet flattened, and puts it on the table*) I'll appeal to my precious Betsy at once! I'll insist on her reading it aloud, and if she hesitates, or if she ~~stutters~~ much less stammers, then let Brown bewa

My venerable

scoundrel of a benefactor is no more! Oh, that he were not no more! (*falls into chair, R. C.*)

Enter WAGTAIL, C. D. R.

Wag. I've run all the way there and back, and I live to tell it. (*seeing BOBTAIL*) Holloa, Bobtail! What's the matter?

Bob. (*not observing*) Again I repeat, would that he were not no more! Would that he were now before me, alive —

Wag. Alive! Oh, then *he* is in the secret, after all! Don't take on so, Bobtail! It's all right! I am happy to say he is alive.

Bob. Wagtail, I am one of the most inoffensive men in the world; but, nevertheless, I think it right to inform you, that if you presume even to attempt a joke upon this subject, I shall instantly cut you off in the flower of your youth. I tell you, he's dead!

Wag. No such thing. He certainly was in danger — but he's better, much better. It was only a tooth.

Bob. A what?

Wag. A tooth, that he was cutting.

Bob. He! Who?

Wag. Why, the child!

Bob. The child!

Wag. Yes, the little boy.

Bob. The little boy? What little boy? Which little boy? Whose little boy?

Wag. I'm very sorry, but I thought you knew —

Bob. Knew! What?

Wag. Why, that Mrs. Bobtail had —

Bob. Mrs. Bobtail had! What? A little boy?

Wag. No, no, I don't say that, but —

Bob. But what? Speak! Tell me the truth, the whole truth, or I'll shake it out of you!

Wag. Don't get into such a dreadful state of excitement about nothing at all.

Bob. Dam — Do you call a little boy nothing at all?

Wag. Excuse me, but I promised Mrs. Bobtail not to let the cat out of the bag!

Bob. Wagtail, if you don't instantly give that cat her liberty, I'll at once seek out some frightful precipice, and precipitate myself headlong into whatever happens to be below beneath it!

Wag. The fact is, Mrs. Bobtail only —

Bob. Only what, sir?

Wag. Why, to — to —

Bob. Don't stand to to to-ing, sir!

Wag. Why, to go as far as a certain turnpike, and call upon a certain nurse, and inquire after a certain invalid, but she didn't say it was a little boy — but it was, a little boy, and a

sple did specimen, too — not a bit like you, by the by. I then hurried back. I couldn't do less, after Mrs. Bobtail's telling me, in the same mysterious manner, by the by, that — that he was so anxious —

Bob. He? Who?

Wag. That I can't say, unless it's the Alderman.

Bob. The Alderman?

Wag. Yes, she said something about the Alderman. To be sure, it might have been Bobby.

Bob. Bobby?

Wag. Yes, she said something about Bobby.

Bob. Brown, Langford, Bobby, little boy, Alderman, Bobby! I shall go mad! Wagtail, let's go mad! Wagtail, let's both go mad! Ha, ha, ha! (*very loud. Sings*)

"To-morrow is St. Valentine's Day."

(*NANCY enters, C. D., is crossing to L. D. with a letter — BOBTAIL rushes at her, seizes her by the arm, and drags her forward*) Ha! that — what is that? Give it me!

Nan. Lor, sir, don't go for to read it. I was told to give it to missis on the sly.

Bob. On the sly? Who told you?

Nan. Sha'n't tell!

Bob. You won't?

Nan. No — sha'n't!

Bob. Nancy Muddle, I discharge you!

Nan. Sha'n't go!

Bob. Leave the room!

Nan. Yes, sir. (*going to room, L.*)

Bob. Not that way. As you came, so depart. (*points to C. D.*)

Nan. Yes, sir. (*aside*) Mr. Langford's waiting outside. Never mind — I'll take him round by the private door, and missis shall give him her answer herself! *Exit at shop door, C.*

Bob. Now, then — (*about to open the letter*) Wagtail, do you think I am justified in opening a letter to my wife?

Wag. I do not — I do not.

Bob. No more do I. (*opens the letter*) Now, then, to see who dares to write to Mrs. Bobtail on the sly. Let me see —

(*reads*) "Yours, et cetera." What's the meaning of et cetera?

Wag. Et cetera? Why, et cetera means et cetera.

Bob. Well, do you know I thought so. Only, as you are a French scholar, I thought I'd ask you. (*reads*) "Yours, et cetera, Edward Langford."

Wag. Ah, our youthful landlord. A mere letter of business, I dare say.

Bob. Of course. (*reads*) "My dear Elizabeth" — Well, upon my life, that's rather familiar.

Wag. Never mind. I dare say it's only his style.

Bob. But I don't like his style! I object to his style! If it

had been "My dear Mrs. Bobtail"—or Mrs. B., without the obtail—it would have been sufficiently free and easy; but, "My dear Elizabeth"—Damn it, Wagtail—I say, Wagtail, damn it!

Wag. Go on.

Bob. (*reads*) "You haven't sent me any tidings yet of our dear little one." (*stops and looks at WAGTAIL, who laughs*) What are you laughing at?

Wag. Oh, nothing—only "our dear little one!" Ha, ha, ha!

Bob. Well, sir, what of that? As you very properly observed just now, I dare say it is only his style. (*reads*) "Of my darling son, to whom I soon hope publicly to give that title by marrying his mother." His mother? Pooh! it can't be done. A man can't marry his grandmother, much less his mother!

Wag. Pshaw! I have it! he means the mother of his darling son!

Bob. No, no, no!

Wag. I say yes, yes, yes!

Bob. I am getting horribly confused! I'll read it again. (*reads*) "You haven't sent me any tidings yet of—of—our dear little one"—

Wag. Ha, ha! "Our dear little one!"

Bob. (*suddenly*) Oh, help—help—murder!

Wag. I have it! I see!

Bob. See what?

Wag. The little boy!

Bob. Where? where is he? Come here, you most uncomfortable of infants. Show yourself, like a man!

Wag. Pshaw! I mean I understand all about it. Depend upon it, he is the tender offspring of the late respectable Doctor Brown, who, having no female relative to entrust him to, confided him to the care of Mrs. Bobtail, with a legacy sufficient to provide for him.

Bob. I won't have him! I cut him off! I won't have Brown's money; and if Brown were now before me, I'd fling it in Brown's face, thus! (*crumpling up the letter, and throwing it at WAGTAIL*)

Wag. But, listen—

Bob. I won't! Run down to Brown's lawyers. Tell Brown's lawyers that I won't have Brown's legacy—not a penny of it! Go—go! (*pushing WAGTAIL*) I won't hear a word. There is your hat. (*taking his own hat, places it on WAGTAIL*) Run! fly! (*pushes WAGTAIL off, c.*) And now, now for a frightful scene! now for a terrific domestic tragedy! (*Mrs. BOBTAIL and LANGFORD heard at door, L.*) Holloa! Ha! voices! Mrs. Bobtail and somebody else, and that somebody else, Mr. Langford! They are coming this way. If I could only hide—oh, this store-room—the very place! (*runs into room, L. C., in flat*)

Enter MRS. BOBTAIL, and LANGFORD, L.

Lang. Yes, I trust that Fanny has by this time confessed everything to her father. (*BOBTAIL opens the door to listen*) And I hope, fondly and fervently hope, my dear Elizabeth, that our long and devoted secret attachment will at length be rewarded, and that we shall very soon be publicly united at the altar.

Bob. (*at cupboard*) Well, that's cool, 'pon my life!

Mrs. B. I'm sure I needn't say how sincerely I hope it may be so.

Bob. Do you, indeed? And to think of the no end of times I have called that woman "My precious Betsy!"

Mrs. B. Had you taken my advice, I believe these obstacles to our happiness might have been removed long ago.

Bob. Obstacle! That's me!

Lang. But still there was a risk about it. He might have resisted.

Bob. He'd have been a damned fool if he hadn't!

Lang. A few hours will decide our fate. Can I see you again this evening?

Mrs. B. Certainly — unless my husband —

Lang. That husband of yours is terribly in the way. In short, he must be got rid of.

Bob. (*at the back*) Oh, lord!

Mrs. B. If it must be so, I'll do it.

Lang. A thousand thanks! Farewell, for the present. (*exit, L. D. — as he goes out, BOBTAIL flings a bunch of candles at him*)

Enter NANCY, R. C. D.

Nan. Please, ma'am, I've done as you bid me about getting rid of the mice in that store-room.

Bob. (*slams the door, and calls*) "Murder!"

Nan. What's that? (*runs to the cupboard — BOBTAIL runs out, pale, staggers into chair, L., at table — at the same moment a quantity of candles and soap fall out with BOBTAIL*)

Mrs. B. Ah, John Anthony — dear John Anthony — speak! Oh, he has fainted! Run for some water. Stay — I'll go myself. (*runs out at L. D.*)

Nan. Oh, master, master! Oh, one of his eyes is open!

Bob. Both of his eyes is open! (*starts up*) Oh, blind, confiding tallow-chandler that I have been! But I'll be revenged! Yes, faithless, perjured Betsy, your Bobtail cries for vengeance! I'll make love to every woman I see. I'll begin with you, Nancy. Come to my arms! (*rushes at NANCY, who runs out at L. D., calling, "Murder — help! missis, master's stark mad!"*)

Enter MRS. WAGTAIL, C. D., with the dessert service on a small tray, which she places on table, L.

Mrs. W. (seeing BOBTAIL) What's the matter with the man?

Bob. Mrs. Wagtail—wife of Wagtail—wife of my bosom friend! So much the better. I like it. The atrocity of the thing tickles me much. Mary Anna Matilda, I love you! Exquisite Wagtail, I adore you!

Mrs. W. Good gracious? If your precious Betsy—

Bob. I've no precious Betsy—I've discharged my precious Betsy—I've given my precious Betsy warning!

Mrs. W. But, consider—if Mr. Wagtail—

Bob. Get rid of Wagtail! Cut him off! Consider Wagtail cut off. Fly with me—fly with your devoted Bobtail! (*runs into her arms—she screams, and runs round the stage*)

Enter WAGTAIL, C. D.

Wag. Holloa!

Enter MRS. BOBTAIL, L. D., with a glass of brandy-and-water.

Mrs. B. Here, John Anthony, drink this—

Bob. I won't!

Wag. I will—

Bob. Stop! (*seizes, and upsets it*)

Enter NANCY, L. D.

Nan. Dinner's quite ready, ma'am!

Bob. Touch it at your peril! Bring your dinner in here, ma'am—here—let me see your dinner—and then you'll see how I'll serve your dinner. This—this is what I'll do with your dinner! (*seizing up the dessert service, and flinging it out of the window, R.*)

Mrs. W. (screaming) Ah—Aunt Dorothy's china!

Bob. And now, farewell forever! The ties that united us are broken. I snap them asunder, as I do this—(*snatching WAGTAIL'S stick out of his hand, which he breaks across his knee, and flings out of the window*) And now I leave this hated house, never, never to return! (*takes up WAGTAIL'S hat, and puts it on*) No—on second thoughts, I will stop where I am. I'll never go out again! (*flings WAGTAIL'S hat out of the window*)

Wag. Zounds, my best hat!

Bob. Take your hat—I don't want it. (*thrusting one of the bonnet boxes on WAGTAIL'S head*)

Omnes. He's mad—mad!

Bob. I am—ha, ha, ha! (*dancing about*)

Enter NURSE, C., with a baby in long clothes.

Bob. (seeing her—brings her down, C.) Now, ma'am—
Nurse. Does Mrs. Bobtail live here, sir?

Bob. Yes, ma'am — I am Mrs. Bobtail — I mean — I —
Nurse. It's all the same. There he is, sir, and his papa will be here directly. (*gives him the baby*)

Mrs. B. Oh, the dear little fellow! Give him to me.

Bob. No, ma'am — I will *not* give up the dear little one till I have asked the dear little fellow a few questions. Now, sir, who are you? What's your name? Who are you, I say? Remember, you are on your oath, ma'am — sir, I mean. Whose child are you?

Enter LANGFORD, L. D.

Lang. Mine!

Bob. Yours? Wagtail, seize me — hold me tight, or I shall do him an injury. So you confess it?

Lang. Further concealment is unnecessary, for to-morrow will see us publicly united.

Bob. I forbid the banns! Hold me tighter than ever!

Lang. Then I must dispense with your consent — and so must Fanny, too.

Bob. Fanny, too? Wagtail, you need not hold me quite so tight. Fanny? Say Fanny again —

Lang. Fanny, to whom I have been secretly married for more than a year.

Bob. But who's the Alderman?

Lang. My father-in-law.

Bob. Let me go, Wagtail. But, Bobby — who's Bobby?

Lang. My darling son, that you are now so carefully nursing.

Bob. Then take your darling son — *about to throw the child —* MRS. BOBTAIL stops him — *he gives it to the NURSE*) My precious Betsy, behold your repentant tallow-chandler. Oh, these are melting moments! Forgive your Bobtail!

Mrs. B. What for?

Mrs. W. Why, for being jealous of Mr. Langford, in spite of all I could say.

Mrs. B. Well, perhaps appearances were against me.

Bob. Of course. I say, Wagtail, you have rather put your foot into it; so my advice is, that Mrs. Wagtail will take you home, and put you to bed. Don't let him get up for a month!

Wag. I should like that of all things. But how about Aunt Dorothy's dessert service?

Bob. Why, go and pick up the pieces, Wagtail. Now let us all go to dinner. Langford, will you take Mrs. Bob?

Wag. (*sings*) "Ri tum — ri tum," &c.

Bob. Ha, ha, ha! Never mind — I don't care now. Mrs. Wag, shall I have the pleasure — (*he takes her arm — sings* "Ri tum — ri tum," &c.) I say, Mrs. Wagtail, we will never try to put an extinguisher on each other again. But let us keep this to ourselves.

Mrs. B. True, my dear. I should not like to be la-

MY PRECIOUS BETSY.

Bob. Oh, my dear, I don't mind it. But stay—I have a few words to say to our kind friends. I don't intend to give up *this* shop, but shall be most happy to serve you with soap and candles every evening at the shortest notice—or, if you don't like that, perhaps you'll come and have a hearty laugh at "**MY PRECIOUS BETSY!**"

WAG. MRS. WAG. BOB. MRS. BOB. LANG.

RIGHT. LEFT.

CURTAIN.

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Seeing Warren	" " " " " " " " " " " "	3	2
Somebody Else	" " " " " " " " " " " "	3	2
The Young Scamp	One Act	5	3
The Scholar	Comedy, Two Acts	5	2
The Lady of the Lions	Burlesque, One Act	5	4
Teddy Roe	Farce, " " " " " " " " " " " "	4	2
That Nose	" " " " " " " " " " " "	6	2
Trying It On	" " " " " " " " " " " "	3	3
The Wandering Minstrel	" " " " " " " " " " " "	4	3
The Bengal Tiger	" " " " " " " " " " " "	4	2
The Rough Diamond	" " " " " " " " " " " "	6	3
The Eton Boy	" " " " " " " " " " " "	3	2
The Turned Head	" " " " " " " " " " " "	6	1
The Trumpeter's Daughter	" " " " " " " " " " " "	4	1
The Forest Rose	Comedy, Two Acts	6	4
Who killed Cock Robin?	Farce, One Act	2	2

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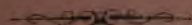
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CHARLES H. SPENCER, 203 Washington St., Boston,
PUBLISHER.

1860. 20. 2

MY TURN NEXT.

A Farce.

BY

THOMAS J. WILLIAMS, Esq.

BOSTON.

CHARLES H. SPENCER,

203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1870, Feb. 4.
 Gift of
 Wm. F. Spencer,
 of Boston.
 MY TURN NEXT

CHARACTERS.

NEW HOLBURN THEATRE ROYAL,
 London, 1866.

BOSTON MUSEUM, 1867.

TARAXICUM TWITTERS (<i>a Village Apothecary—1st Low Comedy</i>)	Mr. Belmore.	W. Warren.
TIM BOLUS (<i>his Professional Assistant—2d Low Comedy</i>)	Mr. Willmott.	J. H. Ring.
TOM TRAP (<i>a Commercial Traveller</i>)	Mr. H. Westland.	G. F. Ketchum.
FARMER WHEATKAR (<i>from Danbury—Utility</i>)	Mr. H. Butler.	C. L. Farwell.
LYDIA (<i>Twitters' Wife—1st Walking Lady</i>)	Miss Foote.	Emily Mestayer.
CICELY (<i>her Niece</i>)	Miss A. Lennox.	Mrs. T. M. Hunter.
PEGGY (<i>Twitters' Maid-servant and Housekeeper</i>)	Mrs. Raymond.	Mrs. Maria Maeder.

SCENE—A Country Apothecary's Shop Parlor.

PERIOD—Present Date.

Duration of Performance—45 Minutes.

COSTUMES.

TWITTERS—Old-fashioned blue-tail coat with bright buttons, tremendous white "choker" with ample ends, large nosegay stuck in buttonhole of coat, grayish trousers, extensive shawl-pattern waistcoat.

TOM TRAP—Smart commercial traveller's make-up.

TOM BOLUS—Apprentice's make-up, black apron, &c., &c., whiskers, great coat, gaiters, broad-brimmed hat, &c.

LYDIA—*First Dress*—Smart travelling costume, blue jacket, hat with feather, &c., &c. *Second Dress*—Becoming morning costume, silk dress, &c.

CICELY—Ditto.

Peggy—Ordinary servant's dress. brown stuff gown and apron, &c.

MY TURN NEXT.

SCENE. — *A respectably furnished Parlor, connected with an Apothecary's Shop. Principal entrance at back, C.; doors, R. and L.; over chimney piece, R., an old-fashioned blunderbuss is suspended by strings; at back, L., of door, a window, through which shop, with colored bottles, jars, &c., is seen; sideboard, R.; sofa, L.*

TIM BOLUS discovered — *his dress evinces a combination of the country bumpkin with the apothecary's assistant.*

Tim. Ecod! I must just titivate a bit. This be an ewentful day, and no mistake. Our new missus be a-coming home this morning. Master's put on all his Sunday best. By gum! he be a buck, and no mistake! (*spoonily*) Helgho! don't I wish I was going to be married!

Enter TOM TRAP, C. — Smart commercial traveller's make-up, knickerbockers, &c. — carries a whip.

Trap. Halloa! Tim Bolus, where's your master?

Tim. He's a tendin' to purfessional dooties in the front shop, sir. He be a makin' up a proscription, and then he's a goin' to meet his wife — our new missus — as is a comin' home to-day.

Trap. But how is it they didn't come home together?

Tim. You see, sir, master has only been married a month. He's been on what they call the *high-mental tower*; but he was obligated to come home, all of a sudden, the day before yesterday on purfessional business — leaving missus and her sister to come home to-day.

Trap. (*laughing*) And so my worthy friend Twitters is married at last?

Tim. Yes, sir. I approves o' the match myself. It will take the *nonsense* out of master. You see, master's werry excitable, and nat'rally narvious by natur'; and, as for 'spicions, why, once he gets a hidea into his 'ed, why, there ain't never no getting it out again.

Twit. (*outside, in shop*) How's this? Tim Bolus, where are you?

Tim. (*starting*) Holloa! there be master a-callin' o' me!

Enter TARAXICUM TWITTERS, C., in a tremendous bustle — he is jauntily attired in an old-fashioned blue coat with bright buttons, gray trousers, showy shawl pattern waistcoat, &c., an enormous nosegay is stuck in his button-hole — he has on his "professional apron."

Twit. (*as he enters, not seeing TRAP — bawling*) Now, then, Tim Bolus, what do you mean by dawdling about here? What's the use of my having a professional assistant to attend to the pestle and mortar department, if I'm to do all the pestle and mortar department myself? on this auspicious day, too!

Trap. Well, Twitters, my boy? (*slaps him on the back*)

Twit. (*starting nervously*) Holloa! Tom Trap, my boy, I declare you quite frightened me! (*wiping his face with handkerchief*) Will you believe it, there's half the village been into my shop this morning, bothering me for 'pennorths o' cough lozenges and ha'porths o' peppermint drops. It's done on purpose to flurly me — I'm sure it is! (*turning to TIM sharply*) Now, then, Tim Bolus, instead of listening to what I've got to say, perhaps you'll see after the shop, will you?

Tim. I be a-going, sir. (*aside, admiringly — going*) Ecod! measter be a swell this morning, and no mistake!

Exit, at back, C.

Trap. Twitters, my boy, I congratulate you — 'pon my life I do!

Twit. (*complacently*) Yes, Tom Trap. I'm married at last — to a lovely widow! (*ecstatically*) Oh, Toin Trap, such a widow!

Trap. (*laughing*) Lucky dog you!

Twit. A most fascinating widow! Met her at our agricultural ball! I don't often dance, Tom Trap; but I flatter myself I *did* step out on that occasion! (*dances nimbly to and fro*)

Trap. Gay young dog! What's the fair one's name?

Twit. Her name was Brown (*slyly*) Although fair, she was Brown. Ha, ha! a joke. Yes, Mrs. Brown, the blooming relict of the late Brown of Bedford (*suddenly altering his manner — mysteriously*) And yet do you know, Tom Trap, I was a long time before I could make up my mind to take the awful plunge?

Trap. Why, what a timid fellow you are, Twitters.

Twit. (*nervously*) Timid, Tom Trap; enough to make me. (*looking round mysteriously*) A week before my marriage, I received this strange anonymous epistle. (*producing letter from his pocket, and reading*)

"Potheary, beware!
If you don't take care,
This marriage you're bent on,
You're sure to repent on!
(signed) A VOICE FROM THE CROWD."

The style you see is vigorous, although the orthography is peculiar.

Trap. (*laughing*) Mysterious — very mysterious!

Twit. (*putting letter in his pocket*) Don't like to think of it, Tom Trap. I'm naturally nervous. It fidgets me — worries me — keeps me awake of a night. (*endeavoring to change conversation*) By the by, you've heard of my new invention — my "Triumphant Tincture."

Trap. "Triumphant Tincture." Can't say I have.

Twit. (*radiantly*) Wonderful invention — selling by the thousand — good for all sorts of things. Cured a whole village of tooth-ache, only the day before yesterday! (*in a great bustle*) But I say, I must get ready to go and meet my little wifey at the station. You'll stay, and be introduced to my little wifey?

Trap. To be sure I will. I must just call on a customer in the High Street. I'll be back in ten minutes. *Exit at back, c.*

Twit. (*alone*) Nice fellow Tom Trap — very nice fellow. I'll give him a bottle of my "Triumphant Tincture." (*looking up at clock — running about in great excitement, bawling*) Peggy, bring me my hat, my gloves, my umbrella — a — a — haven't a moment to lose. (*importantly*) Dear, dear! what a thing it is to be a married man!

Enter PEGGY, R., with hat, umbrella, &c., — she enters with a half sulky air.

Peggy. (*sulkily*) There's yer rat, and there's yer rumberella.

Twit. (*angrily imitating her*) "There's yer rumberella!" What do you mean by addressing your master in that impertinent manner? Are you not aware (*striking a conceited attitude*) that I am going to meet my wife, Mrs. Taraxicum Twitters?

Peggy. (*sulkily*) Wife, indeed! What did you want with a wife at your time of life?

Twit. (*offended*) My time of life! why, I'm just in my manly bloom. (*angrily puts on hat, but forgets to take off apron*)

Peggy. (*sulkily*) A pretty treat, just as I was getting things to rights a bit, and a-settlin' down into the situation, to have a strange female a meddlin' and a hinterferin'.

Twit. (*nervously putting up umbrella, and immediately shutting it again*) Female! how dare you call my wife a female? (*angrily*) My wife is not a female!

Peggy. (*continuing sulkily*) What need was there for you to get married, when you'd got a noneest industrious 'ousekeeper like me to look arter you?

Twit. (*angrily*) You don't suppose I was going to keep single all my life to please you, did you? It's high time I did get married. Everything is topsy-turvy in this establishment.

The weekly bills are increasing frightfully. What's that you've got in your hand?

Peggy. (withholding paper) A—a—it's the greengrocer's memmy-rantum.

Twit. (taking it from her) Memmyrantum indeed! *(reading)* "Cabbage, fourpence — parsnips, sixpence — Brussels sprouts, eighteen pence! Now, who ever heard of eighteen pennyworth of Brussels sprouts?"

Peggy. (indignantly) Wegetables is riz in consikens of the 'Merriken war.

Twit. (angrily) 'Merriken fiddlesticks! it's a conspiracy to defraud me! *(suddenly looking at clock)* Halloa! one o'clock. Good gracious me! I shall be too late for my little wify! *(makes hastily for door)*

Peggy. (calling after him) Ain't yer going to take yer hapron off?

Twit. (in a terrific flurry) I declare, I forgot my professional apron! *(hastily takes off apron — throws it away)* I shall be late — I shall be late! *(spasmodically puts up umbrella, and exit at back violently)*

Peggy. (alone) That ere "Wolce from the Crowd," as I sent him, wasn't o' never no use; he's gone and chucked hisself away on some widdier as he met at a swarry; it's werry agger-awakin'. I declare, if it wasn't that young Tim Bolus is a-dying o' love for me, I'd give warning, that I would! I don't so much mind a master, but *(with a stamp)* I hates to be ordered about by a missus! *Exit, indignantly.*

LYDIA and CICELY enter at back, c., dressed in becoming travelling costume, little hats with feathers, blue jackets, &c. — they carry railway rugs, small travelling-bags, &c., &c.

Lydia. This is the house, sure enough. How very strange my husband wasn't at the station to meet us!

Cicely. We must have missed him. He is usually so attentive. *(looking round)* Why, there's nobody at home.

Lydia. He may have been suddenly called away by professional business. But, Cicely, how very provoking that we should have forgotten the dressing-case I purchased as a present to my husband. However, we will go up to the station presently to see after it. By the by, Cicely *(seriously)*, let me remind you that I have always carefully refrained from mentioning to Mr. Twitters any of the circumstances connected with my late husband's unsuccessful career.

Cicely. Poor man! he was always in debt and difficulties.

Lydia. Yes, he was constantly removing from town to town, and perpetually changing his name in order to baffle the pursuit of his creditors.

Cicely. (catching sight of blunderbuss over chimney-piece)

Why, I declare, Lydia, Mr. Twitters has got one of those old-fashioned blunderbusses!

Lydia. What a very barbarous looking affair; the first step I shall take will be to remove that very unpicturesque piece of furniture to some less conspicuous part of the premises.

Twit. (outside) Where are they? where are they?

Cicely. Ah, here comes Mr. Twitters!

Enter TWITTERS, C.

Twit. (striking a tremendous attitude, with a burst of feeling) Delightful sight! my Lydia, my little wifey — welcome to Taraxicum's house, welcome to Taraxicum's arms! (rushes at LYDIA, embraces her, and then embraces CICELY) You must have come one way, while I was going the other —

Lydia. (laughing) No, it was you who went the other way —

Twit. (interrupting) While I was coming the one — (with another burst of feeling) Oh, what a delightful thing it is to be a family man! (in his extreme excitement he is about to embrace CICELY again instead of LYDIA, when the latter pulls him back) Oh, true! but, spouse adored, let me present to you at once the subordinate members of my establishment. (calling) Tim! Peggy!

Enter immediately TIM, C., and PEGGY, R.

Peggy. (without looking at LYDIA) I can't abear to look at her! (flounces round and turns her back upon the rest)

Twit. In the honest individual before you (pointing to TIM), you behold, united, my head clerk, chemical assistant, confidential coachman, and pharmaceutical dispenser, alias doctor's boy.

Tim. (sheepishly, making a country scrape) Ees, I be all at! There be a tidy deal to do. (grinning idiotically) He, he!

Twit. (turning to PEGGY, who has been all this time standing with her back turned) The handmaiden whom you behold yonder my kitchen-maid, dairy-maid, cook, and housekeeper combined. (bawling) Peg-gy!

Peggy. (without turning round, bawling with all her might) es, sir!

Twit. (imperatively) Stand a little more sideways.

Peggy. (turns sulkily round makes a bob, and immediately turns back again — aside, emphatically) I've seen her phizzy mahogany before.

Twit. You see, beloved Lydia, I have long sighed for a catelar divinity to preside over my shirt buttons — a guardian angel to protect my silver spoons. (to PEGGY) Now look at

that scrubbing-brush; is it usual to leave scrubbing-brushes on parlor chimney-pieces?

Peggy. (hastily, half turning round) I told Tim to take it away.

Tim. (importantly) Scrubbing-brushes ain't in my compartment!

Peggy. (turning sharply on TIM) Yes, they are!

Tim. (turning sharply on PEGGY) No, they ain't!

Peggy. (aggravatingly) Yes, they are!

Tim. (aggravatingly) No, they ain't! *(row to be worked up between TIM and PEGGY)*

Lydia. (mildly) Peggy, I desire that for the future my husband's requests may meet with immediate attention.

Peggy. (aloud—sulkily) Werry good, mum. *(aside)* She's a-beginnin'. She'll be a rare slave-driver—she will. I shall have a pretty time on it!

Lydia. Come, Cicely, we'll survey the rest of the premises.

Twit. (accompanying them to the door—hurriedly) I'll be with you directly, my love—directly.

Exeunt LYDIA and CICELEY, R.

Peggy. (turning round to look after LYDIA—emphatically) I've seen that phizzy mahogany before! *(immediately turns back again—TWITTERS kisses his hand after LYDIA, then turns sharply upon PEGGY, who is still standing with her back turned)*

Twit. Peg-gy;

Peggy. (starting and turning round sulkily) What's up now?

Twit. (pompously) I insist that for the future you behave with the greatest deference to my wife, Mrs. Taraxicum Twitters, a lady who, in her late husband's lifetime, was accustomed to keep two house-maids and a "buttons."

Peggy. (scornfully) Her late husband—what! Gregory Green?

Twit. Gregory Green? No, Benjamin Brown!

Peggy. (decidedly) Begging your parding, she was Mrs. Green when I knowed her—Mrs. Green, of Gloucester—I remembers her well.

Twit. (surprised) Mrs. Green, of Gloucester. *(angrily)* Stuff! you're out of your mind!

Peggy. (pertinaciously) Not a bit of it. I lived house-maid with a family in the werry town for six months or more, and I heerd all about it.

Twit. (surprised) All about what?

Peggy. All about poor Green.

Twit. (surprised) What about poor Green?

Peggy. (with quiet emphasis) Well, he disappeared werry myster'usly.

Twit. (surprised) Disappeared very mysteriously! Why, what became of him?

Peggy. (impressively) Nobody never know'd what became of him.

Twit. (*puzzled—aside*) Strange—very strange! (*aloud*) A—a—did his wife seem to regret him?

Peggy. (*mockingly*) Regret him! ha, ha! She didn't seem to mind it a bit.

Twit. (*with increasing surprise*) Didn't seem to mind it a bit! What the devil do you mean?

Peggy. (*significantly*) I don't mean nothing, sir. I only knows the neighbors thought it unkinmon sing'lar.

Twit. (*nervously*) Do you mean to tell me you're quite sure of all this?

Peggy. (*emphatically*) Sure! do yer think I arn't got never no eyes?

Twit. (*aside, anxiously*) Strange—very strange! (*endeavoring to conceal his agitation*) A—a—Peggy, you had better attend to your domestic avocations.

Peggy. (*triumphantly*) Werry good, sir. To think that Mrs. Brown of Bedford should turn out to be Mrs. Green of Gloucester—ha, ha! (*at door, triumphantly*) It's wery mysterious, ain't it, sir. *Exit, R.*

Twit. Mysterious! it is *very* mysterious! Mrs. Green of Gloucester! My wife never told me she had already had two husbands. I—I don't exactly know what to make of it. (*endeavoring to reassure himself*) But I suppose it's all right—it *must* be all right. (*with a forced laugh*) Ha, ha! There's evidently a mistake somewhere. Mistakes will happen; even I—I—Taraxicum Twitters, sometimes make mistakes. Only yesterday, I gave a fellow salts of senna instead of sarsaparilla. (*reassured*) Yes, it's a mistake evidently.

Enter TOM TRAP, C.

Trap. I say, Twitters, (*slaps him on the back*) you've put your foot in it with that "Triumphant Tincture" of yours.

Twit. (*starting nervously*) What's the matter now?

Trap. Why, I've just met Caleb Coriander, the crusty old chemist from Cottenham. He says that your "Triumphant Tincture" is precisely identical with his "Infallible Fomentation."

Twit. (*surprised*) You don't mean that?

Trap. He's going to prosecute you instantan, with the utmost rigor of the law.

Twit. (*starting*) Prosecute me! Goodness gracious! But how was I to know? It's very disagreeable to have one's inventions anticipated in this unfair manner. (*looking off*) Hush! here comes my wife. Not a word about the secret I've discovered.

Trap. (*surprised*) What secret?

Twit. (*beginning to get excessively flurried*) True; I forgot it wasn't you.

Trap. What wasn't me?

Twit. Never mind. Hush! Breathe not a word. She comes — a — a I'll introduce you to Mrs. Green.

Trap. (*surprised*) Mrs. Green?

Twit. (*confused*) No, Mrs. Brown — no, Mrs. Twitters I mean —

Trap. (*aside — surprised*) My friend Twitters seems slightly bewildered this morning.

Re-enter LYDIA and CICELY at back, c.

Lydia. (*as she enters*) We've been looking all over the shop.

Cicely. What pretty little bottles to be sure.

Lydia. Yes. I had no idea there were so many kinds of poison.

Twit. Eh? (*starting — aside nervously*) So many kinds of poison. My wife seems to take an interest in *poison*, (*in an agitated tone*) My love, permit me to introduce my friend, Tom Trap. (*introducing vacantly*) Tom Trap, my love; my friend, my wife — my Trap — no!

Trap. (*bowing to LYDIA — suddenly recognizing CICELY*) Can I believe my eyes!

Cicely. (*recognizing TRAP aside — surprised*) How very singular! (*aside to LYDIA*) Why, Lydia, that's the young man who was so very attentive to me at that public ball.

Trap. (*looking at CICELY*) My delightful little partner, sure enough! (*looking at LYDIA*) And, if I mistake not, the lady who accompanied her. (*bows several times to LYDIA, with whom enters into conversation — aside*)

Twit. (*watching them, L., surprised*) Tom Trap is bowing to my wife again! Tom Trap seems to know my wife. (*watching them suspiciously*) Why, he keeps on bowing to my wife. So *causingly* Green disappeared mysteriously. (*plaintively*) Poor Green! I seem to feel for Green. (*struck by a sudden idea*) I wonder what became of Brown! I — I'll take an early opportunity of questioning my wife. (*coughing importantly*) Ahem! My dear, I should like to have a little quiet conversation with you.

Lydia. (*calmly*) By and by my love; at present I am going out on some very particular business. Are we not, Cicely?

Cicely. Yes; very particular business.

Lydia. (*aside*) I can't tell him it's about the dressing-case.

Loud, laughing) It's a secret.

Cicely. (*laughing*) A profound secret!

Twit. (*nervously, but with a tremendous attempt at the stately*) secret! A — a — a wife should have no secrets from her husband.

Lydia. (*laughing*) Very pretty in theory, but it doesn't always do in practice. Good-by, love, (*kisses Twitters*) I

Shan't be long. (*with mock gravity*) The idea of expecting to know your wife's secrets. (*laughing gayly*) Ha, ha, ha! Come, Cicely. (*at door LYDIA and CICELY stop—LYDIA is seen to whisper to CICELY, who whispers to LYDIA in return—they both glance at TWITTERS, and exeunt, c.*)

Twit. (*aside suspiciously*) They were whispering! There is a secret!!! (*aloud—turning abruptly to TRAP*) You seem to know my wife?

Trap. I have had the pleasure of meeting her once at a party with her charming sister.

Twit. (*rather anxiously*) When she was Mrs. Brown of Bedford? (*hastily correcting himself*) I mean when she was Mrs. Green of Gloucester?

Trap. (*quietly*) No, at the period to which I allude she was Mrs. White, of Warwick.

Twit. (*starting violently*) White of Warwick! Nonsense! A—a—my dear sir, you must be confounding Green of Brown—no, I mean White of Green—no, I mean Green of Gloucester with White of Warwick! (*with a faint attempt at a joke*) There is a similarity in the names.

Trap. Not at all, my dear sir; some particular friends of mine were intimately acquainted with the late White.

Twit. (*agitated—aside*) White of Warwick! My wife never told me anything of White of Warwick. (*wiping his face with pocket handkerchief*) I didn't like Green of Gloucester, but I can't swallow White of Warwick at all. (*thumping his chest*) He won't go down. He'll disagree with me frightfully. I—I'm almost afraid to ask any more questions. (*aloud—falteringly*) May I be permitted to inquire—a—a—what became of the late White?

Trap. (*calmly*) He disappeared very mysteriously.

Twit. (*starting violently*) The devil he did! (*aside—horror-stricken*) Why, Green disappeared very mysteriously!

Trap. (*continuing calmly*) No one ever knew what became of him. The last I heard of him was that he had no end of mushroom ketchup for supper one night, and was never afterwards seen in the town again.

Twit. (*aside, starting*) Mushroom ketchup! (*the terrible idea beginning to gain ground in his mind*) To an apothecary, mushroom ketchup sounds suspicious! very suspicious! fearfully suspicious! (*falls into chair, R. of table*)

Enter FARMER WHEATEAR, C.

Wheatear. (*with a bluff hearty manner*) Halloa, Twitters my boy, how are you, eh? (*gives TWITTERS a slap on the back, TWITTERS starts up in alarm—saluting TRAP*) Mornin' likewise to you, sir. (*looking at TWITTERS, who is vainly endeavoring to conceal his agitation*) But what's the matter with 'pothecary? you look all no how!

Twit. (*tragically*) I am all no how! (*remembering*) No! I'm all right, *very* all right! I suppose I've a right to be all right if I think proper.

Wheat. (*surprised*) Of course you have.

Twit. (*irritably*) I'm not obliged to be ill to please you, am I?

Wheat. In course not. (*aside*) Why he be rayther out o' temper this morning. (*aloud*) And so you are married, are you! (*giving him a dig in the ribs*) ho, ho, ho! and to a main fine woman too!

Twit. (*astounded — suspiciously*) How do you know she's a fine woman?

Wheat. The neighbors pointed her out to me as she went up High street just now; but bless you I had seen her afore.

Twit. (*more and more surprised*) You had seen her afore! (*walking rapidly up to him*) Where did you see her afore?

Wheat. Where? why, I used often to come across her in our town, when she was Mrs. Black of Banbury.

Twit. (*horrified*) Mrs. Black of Banbury!!! (*falls into a chair — but immediately jumps up again — aside, convulsively*) Green, Brown, White, Black! She's been all the colors of the rainbow! (*aloud — violently*) Does anybody know of any more?

Wheat. (*surprised*) Any more what?

Twit. (*wildly*) Don't stand on any ceremony! Half a dozen more or less won't make much difference. (*hysterically*) One gets accustomed to this sort of thing you know.

Trap. } (*together*) What sort of thing?

Wheat. }

Twit. (*suddenly remembering*) Stay! (*to WHEATEAR — trembling in every limb*) A — a — what became of the late Black?

Wheat. (*quietly*) He disappeared very mysteriously.

Twit. (*spasmodically*) Ha, ha! Of course he did — to be sure he did! So shall I — so shall I! (*aside — with desperate composure*) It's MY TURN NEXT! I've married a female Bluebeard! (*turning to TRAP, and taking his hand — pathetically*) Trap, my boy, we've always been good friends, haven't we?

Trap. (*shaking his hand*) Of course we have.

Twit. (*falteringly*) If anything should happen —

Trap. (*surprised*) Why, what do you expect to happen?

Twit. (*evasively*) Nothing — nothing! (*impressively*) I say, if anything should happen, draw up a little memoir for me for the county paper. Say I was a good husband, as far as it went; and would have been a good father — (*faltering — overcome by emotion*) if — if they had only given me the time!

Trap. (*astounded*) What the deuce is he talking about?

Wheat. (*aside*) Why, he be a blubbering now!

Twit. (*wipes his eyes with handkerchief*) Keep up your spirits, Tom Trap. (*shuddering*) It's an awful thing, I know — an inno-

cent apothecary cut off in the flower, I may say the *chamomile flower*, of his years!

Trap. (to WHEATEAR—*surprised*) Well, I always thought Twitters was eccentric.

Wheat. Eccentric! I'm darned if I don't think he be stark staring mad! (*rather alarmed*) I be awful frightened o' the phoby; he might bite un! Here's off! I wish you a good-morning, Muster Trap! *Exit hurriedly at back, c.*

Twit. (*aside—ruefully*) Four husbands, and all disappeared mysteriously! There's not much doubt about what became of them! Mushroom ketchup! horrible depravity! One reads of this sort o' thing in the newspapers. (*looking wildly round, and seizing TRAP melo-dramatically by the arm*) Don't leave me, Trap! Ha! hush! she comes!

Re-enter LYDIA and CICELY, who during the last words have appeared at door at back, c.

Lydia. (to CICELY, *aside—vexed*) How very provoking—another train arrived, and the dressing-case not yet forwarded!

Twit. (*contemplating LYDIA—aside*) There's a determined expression in my wife's countenance that I never noticed before! (*nervously*) I—I should like—a—a—to be off!

Enter PEGGY, R.

Peggy. (*sulkily*) Please, mum, what be I to put in the sarse?

Lydia. (*looking up to TWITTERS*) My love, do you like mushroom ketchup?

Twit. (*starting bolt off chair*) Mushroom ketchup!!! (*aside—spasmodically*) Here we are! the crisis is at hand! (*with a violent effort*) But I must be calm! I must dissemble. (*aloud*) Mushroom ketchup? a—a—yes! (*stammering violently*) I'm fond of it! I adore it! I revel in it!

Lydia. (to PEGGY) Then procure some immediately; I will come down to the kitchen and impart the finishing stroke to the sauce myself.

Twit. (*aside*) The finishing stroke to the sauce! (*gasping*) There's no longer a doubt about it!

Lydia. (*laughing*) You shall see what sort of a cook I am!

Twit. (*aside—trembling*) Thank ye! I know what sort of a cook you are! Oh! this is very horrible! (*struck by a sudden idea*) Stay! I'll invite Tom Trap; ruthless as my wife is, she'll hesitate before she sacrifices two human beings—a lamb-like apothecary, and an innocent commercial traveller! (*aloud, in a state of terrific trepidation*) Trap! you'll stay dinner; I insist on your staying to dinner!

Trap. (*laughing*) I never require pressing when dinner's in question.

Twit. That's right! (*bawling to PEGGY*) Peg-gy!

Peggy. (*shouting*) Yes, sir!

Twit. Knives and forks for four! (*bawling*) For four! (*roaring*) Do you hear? *Exit at back.*

Peggy. (*bawling*) For four! all right, sir? I ar'n't deaf! (*aside*) There's a summit the matter with master; it strikes me he's sorry for his bargain already. (*triumphantly*) Serves him right for getting married! *Exit, R.*

Trap. (*aside*) This lawsuit must be prevented. *Twitters* will pay no attention to the matter. Aha! here comes his wife. Business is business — I'll speak to *her* about it.

Enter LYDIA.

(*approaching LYDIA — aside*) I should like a moment's conversation with you on a subject which deeply affects your husband's interests.

Lydia. (*hastily*) My husband's interests! Proceed, I beg.

Re-enter TWITTERS, at back.

Twit. (*watching them — suspiciously*) Aha! they are whispering. (*trembling*) She's enlisting the services of the commercial traveller. (*in great trepidation*) A — a — I'll fetch Tim — I'll provide antidotes. Thank goodness, I'm forewarned! Yes! (*looking towards LYDIA*) Serpent — rattlesnake — boa constrictor! your victim is on the alert *this time!*

Exit, at back, C., in great trepidation.

Lydia. (*who has meanwhile been conversing with TRAP — aside, surprised*) My husband, you say, is threatened with a lawsuit?

Trap. Yes, serious affair — infringement of patent — he hasn't a leg to stand upon; and yet I can't get him to attend to the matter.

Lydia. (*resolutely*) Then I will attend to it for him.

Trap. The best plan would be to compromise — offer Coriander fifty pounds down. He's in the village now on business.

Lydia. (*eagerly*) Fifty pounds! I have the money, but I cannot draw it without my husband's signature; however, I'll contrive to obtain it without letting him know my object.

Re-enter TWITTERS at back.

Twit. (*aside — vexed*) Can't find that precious Tim anywhere. (*perceiving TRAP and LYDIA, who are conversing earnestly — aside*) There they are, at it still! There's a plot on foot; that's clear!

Lydia. (to TRAP, not perceiving TWITTERS) Leave it to me; I'll undertake to obtain my husband's signature.

Twit. (listening intently) Her husband's signature!

Lydia. (continuing) The rest we'll settle after dinner.

Twit. (aside — alarmed) Yes, it will be all settled after dinner! I must put a stop to this. (retreating a few paces, and coughing as though he had just entered) Ahem! — ahem!

Lydia. (to TRAP) My husband! not a word! (to TWITTERS, approaching him affectionately) My love, you must be hungry; but dinner will soon be ready. You'll say that mushroom ketchup was an excellent notion of mine.

Twit. (shuddering — aside) It strikes me she's "ketchupped" the lot! (resolutely) I won't touch a morsel!

Lydia. (looking at him affectionately) My love, some trifling matter has evidently ruffled your usual cheerful serenity.

Twit. (aside) Trifling matter! she calls four ketchupped husbands a trifling matter!

Lydia. (continuing, cheerfully) But dinner will soon put an end to all your troubles.

Twit. (shuddering, aside) Put an end to all my troubles! I — I cannot stand this any longer! I'll be off! (just as he is going towards door, c., LYDIA puts her arm through his)

Lydia. Don't leave me again, love; see, they are bringing in dinner.

Twit. (aside, trembling) She has got me fast! (looking at her) So fair, and yet so diabolical! It only shows what deceitful creatures women are.

Enter CICELY R., followed by PEGGY and TIM bringing in dinner on a ready-laid table.

Cicely. (gayly) The dinner's quite ready. I've been superintending the preparations.

Twit. (aside — starts) Aha! the little un's in the plot!

Peggy. (irritably moving table to c.) Now, then, Tim, don't go shovin' the table agin' me!

Tim. (irritably) Well, I can't help it! I never see such a temper as she is in this morning! (they put down table, c.)

Lydia. Now, Mr. Trap, take your seat next to Cicely.

Trap. With all possible pleasure.

Twit. (aside) Aha! there's Tim! (aside to TIM, spasmodically) Stand close behind my chair — don't move on any pretext!

Tim. (aside — surprised) What's up, I wonder!

Peggy. (sulkily) Please, mum, I've sharpened the carving-knife.

Twit. (aside — starting violently) Sharpened the carving-knife?

Lydia. (who has meanwhile been helping the others) My love, let me give you a little of this boiled fowl.

Twit. (endeavoring to conceal his trepidation, and holding out plate) Thank you — a-a-a very little: I — I'm not very hungry. (aside) I'm starving! (to TIM in a hoarse whisper, handing plate over his shoulder) Take it away!

Tim. (taking plate — aside) Well I never! master ain't a eatin' o'nothin' Howsumever it sha'n't be wasted — I'll eat it! (retires to sideboard R., and greedily devours contents of plate, speaking with his mouth full) Crikey! what lot's o' pepper!

Twit. (taps nervously on empty plate with knife and fork, he then seizes pepper-box, and in a state of violent excitement, "peppers" right and left of plate, takes up mustard-pot, and stirs it violently round and round, &c., &c. — aside) It's astonishing how thirsty I am! I wonder if the ale is all right. (pours out a glass of ale) But no! (stops short as he is about to raise it to his lips) Nobody else has had any yet — a — a — I'll see whether my wife will drink it. (aloud, with a violent attempt at politeness) My love, may I offer you a — a — g-g-glass of — b-b-b-bitters?

Lydia. (calmly) You know, my love, I never drink beer.

Twit. (aside — bitterly) Of course not. She knows what's in it! (aside to TIM, who having polished off contents of plate has resumed his place behind TWITTERS — in a hoarse whisper — handing glass to him) Take it away.

Tim. (taking glass — aside, surprised) Well, I never! a glass o' yale! Master be mortal kind. (tosses off glass of ale)

Lydia. (to TWITTERS) You don't seem to be getting on.

Twit. (takes a large mouthful of "nothing" out of empty plate) I'm getting on famously! (cramming the end of table napkin into his mouth — inarticulately) It's very nice, indeed!

Lydia. Some more mushroom ketchup?

Twit. (starting mysteriously) No, no! (endeavors to withdraw plate) Here's a pretty dose she has given me. She evidently wishes to settle me right off! (to TIM — handing him plate as before, over his shoulder — in a hoarse whisper) Take it away!

Tim. (taking plate) Another dollop! Here's a precious stroke of luck. (returns to sideboard and speedily devours contents of plate)

Twit. (looking at LYDIA — aside) The sphinx is watching me! (aloud) I'm getting on splendidly! (aside) She thinks I've swallowed that awful concoction; she's watching the effect (aloud — losing his self-command, and jumping up from table, tragically) It's abominable!!!

All. (jumping up) What's abominable?

Twit. (recollecting himself — confused) Nothing — nothing! (aside) I must still dissemble. (aloud) A — a — little piece of gristle went the wrong way! (TIM and PEGGY clear table)

Lydia. (to TRAP) I fancy my husband is not very well.

Trap. (to LYDIA) He certainly is in a very singular mood to-day.

Lydia. We'll leave him alone for a moment or two — Mr. Trap, do you and Cicely take a turn in the garden.

Trap. (gallantly offering his arm to CICELEY) Glad of the chance — delighted at the opportunity.

Cicely. (aside) Well, Lydia has married a strange sort of person. *Exit TRAP and CICELEY, R. U. E.*

Twit. (aside — alarmed) What's going on now, I wonder? (aside to TIM in a hoarse whisper) Don't stir!

Tim. (with his mouth full) All right; I won't stir a hinch.

Lydia. (aside) Now will be my time to get his signature to that little document. Stay! I have left it in my room. (to TWITTERS) I shall not be a moment, love. *Exit, L.*

Twit. (alarmed — looking round) Something awful is preparing — I know there is; and I am starving with hunger. (seizing TIM by the arm) Tim, get me something to eat — something wholesome, d'ye hear?

Tim. (surprised) Why, warn't it all wholesome?

Twit. (tragically) Wholesome! I've reason to believe (looking wildly all around) it was the very reverse of wholesome!

Tim. (alarmed) But I say, I've put away the lot!

Twit. (horriſied) You've put away the lot! Oh, this is horrible! Ill-fated Bolus! (anxiously) A — a do you feel a kind of — sort of — (rubbing his chest suggestively, his teeth chattering the while) — num — num — num!

Tim. (aghast, imitating his master) Yes, I feels a sort o' kind o' num — num — num!

Twit. (with increasing earnestness) A peculiar indescribable burning sensation — a sort of internal conflagration?

Tim. (horribly alarmed) Ees, I feels a hinfurnal conflaggaration! (blubbering) I thought it was the pepper!

Twit. (with a tragic burst) Pepper! it's POISON!!

Tim. Poison! (falling on his knees, and bursting forth into stentorian lamentations) Oh lor'! oh lor'! p'isoned in the werry middle o' Love's young dream! (jumping up and rushing to and fro) Just as I was a going to unbuzzum myself to my beloved Peggy! (indignantly) But who ha' been and done it?

Twit. (with melo-dramatic intensity) Ha! — hush! (looking mysteriously all round, and pointing three times over his shoulder in the direction in which LYDIA went out) 'Twas she!

Tim. (mechanically pointing over his shoulder in imitation of his master — ruefully) Who be she?

Twit. (in a hoarse whisper) Mrs. Taraxicum!

Tim. (astounded) What, the new missus?

Twit. Yes! (tragically) The wife of five husbands!

Tim. (aghast) Five husbands! (trembling) Where be the other four?

(TWITTERS pointing tragically downwards, in mute but expressive pantomime)

Tim. (after pointing mechanically downwards in imitation of his master, horror-stricken) Then I'm a murdered wictim!

Twit. (hastily) But quick! rush into the shop — take down

corner jar — right-hand top shelf, and swallow an ounce of the contents — quick, its an antidote!

Tim. (rushing wildly about stage) A nanny-goat? Ees! I'll take a nanny-goat — p'isoned, oh lor', oh lor'!

Rushes frantically off, c.

Twit. (alone, folding his arms gloomily) There's nothing in the Newgate Calendar to come up to this! *(with increasing terror)* But I'll not stop here to be murdered! I'll hide myself under the bed — or in the coal-hole! *(looking off)* Aha! she comes. *(in an agony of apprehension)* Too late, too late!

Enter LYDIA, L.

Lydia. (coaxingly) Now, my love, I — I want you to do me a very particular favor. *(attempting to take his hand)*

Twit. (hastily recoiling) Don't touch — a — a — I'm ticklish!

Lydia. (continuing) I wish you, love, to affix your signature to this little paper.

Twit. That little paper!

Lydia. (continuing) You must have sufficient confidence in me to sign it, without looking at its contents.

Twit. (aside) Some horrible trap! *(struck by a sudden idea)* They've forged a will, and want my signature previous *(shuddering)* to making away with me! *(wipes his face with handkerchief)*

Lydia. Come now, to oblige your little wifey.

Twit. (aside) My little wifey — perfidious crocodile!

Lydia. Come now! (putting her arm through his, and drawing him to table) Here are pen and ink; you will surely not refuse my first request.

Twit. (aside, alarmed) The rattle-snake has got me tight by the arm. She's muscular — very muscular. I'll call Tim! Ah! I forgot, he was poisoned! *(struck by a sudden idea)* Stay! I'll feign indisposition! *(making for sofa — aloud)* A — a strange giddiness — a sudden faintness *(withdrawing his arm, and falling on sofa)* has taken possession of me! *(snores — aside)* She'll think it's the mushroom ketchup. *(snores again)*

Lydia. (aside — surprised) What can be the matter with my dear husband to-day? Perhaps a short nap will do him good. I'm sure he will comply with my request when he awakes! *(looking round)* Ah, I'll cover him over with the railway rug. *(fetches rug from chair, L., — the moment her back is turned TWITTERS bobs up and watches her movements with looks expressive of the most intense anxiety; the instant she turns round from chair TWITTERS hastily resumes his sleeping attitude, and snores violently. N. B. — This manœuvre is repeated every time LYDIA turns away from sofa)*

Twit. (on sofa, and shivering violently) She's going to smother me! *(LYDIA now approaches him with rug, with which she pro-*

ceeds to cover him carefully, during which process TWITTERS continues to snore and groan alternately)

Lydia. (walking away from sofa — *aside*) I wonder what can be the matter with him? (suddenly catching sight of blunderbuss, which is suspended by strings to nails on the wall) Aha! that blunderbuss! (TWITTERS gives a violent start) I'll cut it down at once. (takes carving knife from table — TWITTERS, who is now sitting up on sofa watching her, gives something between a terrified groan and a snore, and falls back on sofa)

Lydia. (more and more astonished — *aside*) Again! (steps back to sofa on tiptoe with carving-knife in her hand, leans over her husband and listens, as though to assure herself that he is asleep — *aside*) He sleeps! (re-crosses stage on tiptoe to C., gets up on chair, and proceeds to cut strings by which blunderbuss is suspended)

Twit. (who has meanwhile re-opened his eyes, and is anxiously watching LYDIA, *aside*) What's she up to now? (horror-stricken) She's getting down the blunderbuss! she's going to blow my brains out!!! (jumps off sofa — aloud, in a paroxysm of terror) Here! I'll sign! I'll sign! I'll sign anything!

Lydia. (who has meanwhile got off chair with blunderbuss) Why, my dear Taraxileum, what is the matter with you?

Twit. (in terrific excitement) Nothing! (taking up pen) Give me the paper! (takes paper from her — *aside*) Folded down that I may not see the contents! (signing) You see — a — a — I'm signing with pleasure; with positive alacrity. (*aside*) Goodness gracious, how I should like to give my wife in charge!

Lydia. (taking paper from him joyfully) Thank you, my love. Now then to forward the draft to my husband's antagonist, and so avert the contemplated lawsuit.

Exit R., with blunderbuss.

Twit (surprised) She's gone! she has taken the blunderbuss with her! She's going to do for somebody!

Re-enter TIM with a large jar under his arm, his face is all covered with white powder.

Tim. (ruefully) I've taken the nanny-goat — it be nasty stuff; but it has done me a deal of good!

Twit. (taking jar out of his hand) Why, what have you been taking?

Tim. (alarmed) You told I corner jar, left-hand top shelf,

Twit. (impetuously) Right-hand top shelf I said. (popping his hand into jar, and pulling out handful of contents) Why, this is camphorated chalk!

Tim. (horror-stricken) Then I'm p'isoned all over again! (at this moment a loud report of firearms heard outside)

Twit. (aghast) Aha! she has shot somebody! (falls on his knees, R. of door at back)

Tim. (*simultaneously with TWITTERS*) Murder! (*falls on his knees, L. of door, at back, c.*)

Enter LYDIA, CICELY, and TRAP, R. U. E., — *the latter has blunderbuss under his arm.*

Lydia. } (*gayly — together*) Victory! victory!

Cicely. }

Trap. I've fired a salute in honor of the occasion.

Lydia. (*L., looking all round*) But where's my husband?

Trap. R. (*looking all round*) Why, what can have become of him?

Cicely. (*L., suddenly perceiving TWITTERS*) Why, there he is!

Lydia. (*astounded*) Why, my dear husband, what are you doing there?

Twit. (*sitting upon the ground*) Fiend! sorceress! avaunt! — keep off! Know that I never tasted your mushroom ketchup.

Tim. (*blubbling*) But I have!

Twit. (*with terrific excitement*) Keep off! You wish to serve me as you did your other four husbands!

Lydia. (*astounded*) My other four husbands!

Twit. (*bitterly*) Yes; Brown, Green, White, and Black, and every other color, for all I know.

Lydia. (*aside — surprised*) I see it all. He has heard of the aliases adopted at various times by my late husband. (*aloud*) My dear Taraxicum, know that the four names you have mentioned represent but one single individual!

Twit. (*surprised*) One single individual!

Lydia. Yes. A long and harassing struggle with debt and difficulties compelled my late husband at various times to assume the fictitious appellations just mentioned by you. (*opening pocket-book and producing letters*) Here are four letters in my late husband's handwriting, signed respectively in each of the four names you have mentioned!

Twit. (*who has meanwhile taken four letters, and compared them*) Black, White, Green, Brown! and all in the same handwriting! But that mushroom ketchup?

Enter PEGGY, R.

Peggy. Ketchup was all right, sir; only I happened to let the top fall off the pepper-castor as I was peppering on it.

Tim. (*with a burst of satisfaction*) Which accounts for the infernal conflaggaration. (*joyously*) Hooray! then I ain't p'isoned, after all!

Lydia. }

Trap. }

Cicely. }

Peggy. }

(*together — astonished*) Poisoned!

Twit. (*rather confused*) No, no, nothinga; a—he doesn't

know what he's talking about. (*aside — drawing a long breath*) She hasn't ketchupped anybody, after all. (*aloud*) But, I say — that mysterious paper I just now signed?

Lydia. Has enabled me to assign to Mr. Coriander the sum of fifty pounds, in consideration of which he has waived proceedings against you.

Twit. (*delighted*) Fifty pounds to save me from a lawsuit, and her own money, too! and *this* is the woman I expected was going to poison me! (*impetuously*) I'll never be suspicious again — never! never!

Tim. (*joyously tucking PEGGY'S arm under his*) Never no more! never no more!

Twit. And let me recommend you (*addressing the rest*), if ever you have anything on your mind, not to go brooding and fretting over it as I did, but to "out" with it at once, and come to a clear understanding; and if any one requires a hint on the subject (*to audience*), you know my shop, ladies and gentlemen; always happy to accommodate you from "Triumphant Tincture" down to "advice gratis." (*rubbing his hands in the shopkeeper fashion*) Parr's Life Pills, pitch plasters, prescriptions carefully prepared! Promise me your custom, and let me hope that, as regards *your* patronage, it really *will* be "MY TURN NEXT."

CURTAIN.



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
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CHARACTERS.

	<i>London, Olympic Theatre, 1859.</i>	<i>Boston Museum, 1865.</i>
JOSEPH IRONSIDE*	Mr. Addison.	Mr. Wm. Warren.
CUNNINGAME (<i>An Attorney</i>) . .	Mr. H. Wigan.	G. G. Turner.
RODOMONT ROLLINGSTONE (<i>A Gentleman at Large</i>)	Mr. G. Vining.	Mr. F. Williams.
JOHN BRITTON	Mr. W. Gordon.	Mr. J. Wilson.
MRS. SMYLIE (<i>A Widow</i>)	Mrs. Stirling.	Miss Kate Denin.
KATIE MAPLESON (<i>Her Niece</i>) .	Miss Cottrell.	Miss Annie Clark.
SARAH JANE (<i>A Village School Girl</i>)	Miss Seymour.	Miss Mary W. Carey.

SCENE — A Cottage near a Kentish Village.

TIME — 1849.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION — 1 hour and 25 minutes.

COSTUMES.

IRONSIDE. — Dark body-coat, drab waistcoat, black trousers, broad-brimmed hat.

CUNNINGAME. — Old-fashioned black body-coat, black waistcoat, gray trousers, low-crowned hat.

ROLLINGSTONE. — Blue jacket, fancy woollen shirt, extravagant plaid trousers, and scarf round waist, Russia boots, straw hat.

JOHN BRITTON. — Plain, modern walking dress.

MRS. SMYLIE. — Neat, gray check, silk morning dress and cap, black silk mantilla.

KATIE. — Neat white morning dress.

SARAH JANE. — Blue frock, white apron with bib, blue stockings, and white cap — complete charity school-girl's dress.

* This part may be played with a north country dialect, as assumed with admirable effect by Mr. Addison, at the Olympic.

NINE POINTS OF THE LAW.

SCENE.— *A pretty morning room in Fairfield Cottage, with French windows, opening on lawn — in the distance a view of the village, with Church, Old Manor House, &c. — chintz furniture — doors, R. and L. — table, with writing materials, &c. — flowers in vases, and other signs of female occupancy — a portrait of MRS. SMYLIE, L.*

As the curtain rises, JOHN BRITTON is discovered on his knees to KATIE.

John. Yes, Katie, I adore you, and if you won't marry me, I'll join the Tower Hamlet's Militia — ship as stoker on board a Government Steam Transport — or do something equally desperate.

Katie. Get up, John, do! if aunt were to catch you — you must ask her consent. Do get up!

Enter MRS. SMYLIE, L. D.

John. Not till I've got *yours* — till then, here I stay, uncomfortable as this position is, for the rest of the morning.

Katie. Then I'll leave you there all the afternoon. (*sees MRS. SMYLIE.*) Oh, dear, here comes my aunt!

Mrs. S. (seeing JOHN on his knees.) Bless me!

John. No — bless me, Mrs. Smylie — bless both of us — kneel, Katie! (*he seizes KATIE's hand, and pulls her down to her knees.*) I adore her, ma'am — she adores me — we implore your blessing!

Mrs. S. (getting above them, c., and waving her hands over their heads melodramatically.) Bless you, my children! And now, you blessed full-grown babies, get up, and tell me what the meaning of this is.

John. (getting up.) It means that we are in love, and mean to marry.

Mrs. S. (c.) Mean to marry is all very well, John Britton, but means to marry is quite another matter. I have no objection to the match, but it must be when you can find a home for me, instead of expecting me to find one for you. (*sits.*)

John. Where can we be so happy as in this snugnest of all possible snuggeries? I do think the best thing old Mrs. Weathercock ever did, in her long and useless life, was to die and leave you this rural Elysium. (*sits L. — KATIE seats herself R. of table.*)

Mrs. S. Oh! so you are under the same impression as everybody else in Fairfield — that she left me the cottage.

John. Didn't I draught her last will and testament in old Groper's office, in this very village?

Mrs. S. I have no doubt she *meant* to leave it me; but a few days after her will was drawn, she quarrelled with me, as she generally did once a week, and revoked her legacy by a — a — what d'ye call it?

John. A codicil!

Mrs. S. Precisely! I needn't detail the steps by which this codicil, contrary to her intentions, remained in force at her death, so that Mr. Ironside, the residuary legatee, became legal owner of the cottage, and I have only the possession of it.

John. Nine points to one in your favor! But has this barbarian — this intruder — this wretched Ironside, attempted to assert his rights?

Mrs. S. By an extremely polite letter, in which, after setting out his claim, he said he would not willingly do anything to inconvenience me.

John. Which you answered —

Mrs. S. By one equally polite, in which I assured him that it would very much inconvenience me to leave Fairfield, so I would avail myself of his kindness, and remain where I was.

John. And there the correspondence stopped?

Mrs. S. For a couple of months, when he followed up his own polite letter, by one much less polite, from his attorney, a Mr. Cunningham.

John. I know — one of the sharpest practitioners in London. And how did you answer him?

Mrs. S. By regretting that my ignorance of legal phraseology entirely precluded me from understanding, much less acting upon, his letter.

John. But he wasn't satisfied with soft sawder like that?

Mrs. S. He sent me a great many more letters, each more legal, and therefore more unintelligible than the other, which I didn't take the trouble of answering at all.

John. That was right — didn't commit yourself. Have they served you with a declaration of ejectment? (*Mrs. SMYLLIE appears not to understand.*) Have they served you with a declaration of ejectment?

Mrs. S. I haven't the slightest idea. All I know is, that here I am, and here, convinced of my equitable, if not my legal rights, I mean to stay. (*folding her work.*)

John. That's right — I'll act as your attorney; and if Cunningham and I don't manage to disgust old Ironside with law between us, say I'm unworthy of my certificate. I shouldn't wonder even if we manage to get the matter into chancery — and then you may stay in the court, and in the cottage, till you attain a green old age.

Mrs. S. Young or old, John Britton, I trust I shall never be green enough to get into a chancery suit. Widow's weeds are bad enough, but one *does* find one's way out of them; but a chancery suit has that worst fault in a woman's eyes — it never wears out.

Enter SARAH JANE, R. D., with a letter — she bobs.

Sarah. A letter for missus, please'm. (*goes c. to MRS. SMYLLIE, bobs, gives her letter, makes another bob, and exit, R. D.*)

Mrs. S. (reads letter.) What's this? — from Mr. Ironside! (*reading.*) "Madam, — Finding that neither my own letters nor those of my lawyer have been attended with any effect in inducing you to give up possession of Fairfield Cottage, I have taken the liberty of coming in person, with my legal adviser, and trust to your respect for the intentions of the testatrix to grant us an early interview. Awaiting your answer, I am, madam, your obedient servant, Joseph Ironside." So, the enemy has advanced his parallels — close quarters at last!

John. Don't see him, my dear Mrs. Smylie. Let me meet him in single combat, with legal, not lethal weapons.

(*KATIE rises and goes up to window, c.*)

Mrs. S. Thank you, John Britton. But we poor, weak women have weapons of our own. What arms — offensive or defensive — can your legal arsenal supply, equal to our artillery of look, smile, and sigh — our armor of helplessness and innocence — our shield of weakness and submission? And when all these fail, think of that irresistible resource — a woman's tears! Like the old Dutch Burghers, we have but to open the sluices, and wash the enemy from the field. Yes, I'll try my woman's weapons — if they fail, I'll come to you for legal ones. (*goes over to table, L., and sits to write — KATIE comes down, R. — JOHN goes to her.*)

John. (aside to KATIE.) Wonderful woman, your aunt, Katie. I'm glad I fell in love with you before I knew her, or I should have popped to her, infallibly — notwithstanding the disparity of our ages! Don't be jealous.

Katie. (R.) Of auntie! Oh, nobody can be jealous of her! She's the dearest, cleverest thing! Isn't everybody in love with her, from the old rector to that odious Mr. Rollingstone? — whom I saw just now coming through the garden.

John. (c.) Ah, an extreme fishy party, Rollingstone — and such a thundering humbug! (*goes up to window and looks out.*)

Mrs. S. Give this to the messenger from the Red Lion, darling. It's to invite Mr. Ironside up to the cottage directly.

Katie. What, the horrid man who wants to turn you out of this dear home?

Mrs. S. (L.) Nothing like civility, my dear. Cats have remarkably soft paws, but the velvet doesn't prevent their scratching, you know.

Katie. Oh, I'm sure you never scratch anybody, auntie. I'll give boots the note directly. (*runs off, R. D. 3 E.*)

John. (coming down, R. c.) Here comes Don Whiskerandos. Now, my dear Mrs. Smylie, do pray be cool and distant with this fellow.

Mrs. S. (L.) Oh, I must be civil to him. He's nephew of Mrs. Weathercock, you know.

John. Who cut him off with a shilling. Depend upon it, he has designs upon your hand, or rather on Fairfield Cottage, which he thinks your property. Let me tell him the real state of the case — he'll quit the field directly.

Mrs. S. (aside.) That's precisely what I don't want. (*to Britton.*) Oblige me by holding your tongue to him on the subject. Promise!

John. Of course, if you wish it. But tell him the facts yourself, and send him about his business.

Mrs. S. What, throw away a weapon just as I am going in to battle?

John. A weapon?

Mrs. S. What weapon like an admirer? One can use him to draw the foe into an ambuscade, retreat behind him when the fire becomes too hot, or, as a last resource, fling him at the enemy's head. I shall take the liberty of employing my Rollingsstone in any of the three ways I may find him most useful. Here he comes!

Enter ROLLINGSTONE, through window, from R., and down C.

Rodom. Ah, Mrs. Smylie! *a los pies de usted*, as we used to say in Mexico. Good morning, Britton! Excuse my abrupt entrance, but I am one of those unhappily constituted individuals who never can go round to a door when they see a window open.

John. (R., *aside*.) And the spoons on the table!

Mrs. S. (L.) Fairfield Cottage is Liberty Hall, you know.

Rodom. (C.) All the better suited to me! (*sits*.) I got rid of my last vestiges of social propriety that summer I spent with the Yankee whalers in the South Sea Islands. Charming people the Fijian Islanders, and by no means so wedded to cannibalism as is generally represented. (*rises*.) By the way, I was just thinking, as I came through the garden, how capitally my Brazilian grass hammock would swing between those two sycamores on the lawn. I fancy I see you in it, *a la Mexicaine*, a cigarrito in your mouth.

Mrs. S. Thank you, I don't smoke.

Rodom. I'll teach you; I give you my honor you'll take to it — one of my genuine *papelitos*, rolled in an Indian corn leaf — admire the perfume. (*takes a cigar case from his pocket, and presents it to Mrs. S.*) Pretty case, isn't it? Made for me by the fair hands of Mariquita, only daughter of the terrible Rosas, the dictator of Paraguay. Ah, if I had staid in South America —

Mrs. S. What a pity you didn't!

Rodom. Yes, it offered a noble field for my energies. By the way, Britton, I've a splendid idea.

John. (*aside*.) Then you never came honestly by it.

Rodom. I must talk it over with you one of these days.

John. What is it?

Rodom. A railway company to develop the enormous cereal resources of the Entre Rios. I would be secretary, you should be solicitor. There's everything to be done in shares.

John. But not everybody — everybody has been done in shares already.

Rodom. Good, deuced good!

Re-enter KATIE, R. D.

Ah! Miss Mapleson!

Katie. Oh, Mr. Rollingsstone, good morning! I've given boots the note, auntie.

Mrs. S. Then run away, darling, and see the blue room made very comfortable for our welcome visitor.

Katie. Yes, auntie, directly.

[*Exit KATIE, L. D. 3 R.*]

Rodom. (R., *aside*.) Our welcome visitor! Oh, ho!

John. (C.) Why, you don't mean you've invited him here?

Mrs. S. (L.) In the relation we stand in, I hope you don't think I could leave him at the Red Lion?

Rodom. (*aside*.) Relation she stands in, eh?

Mrs. S. Go down to the Red Lion instantly, and show him the way.

John. (*aside*.) Invited into the lion's den! Poor old bear, I pity him!

[Exit JOHN, R. D.]

Mrs. S. (*who has seated herself at table, L., rings hand bell*.) Will you excuse me for a moment, Mr. Rollingstone?

Rodom. (R.) A rival on the field for a hundred! I must lose no time — this cottage is worth a bold stroke — I've been heating the iron for a month — it must be hot — let me strike!

Enter SARAH, L. D.: she curtseys.

Mrs. S. (*seated*.) Take care that everything is particularly neat and nice at luncheon, Sarah Jape.

Sarah. Please, m'm, yes. (*curtseys*.)

Mrs. S. You will be very careful in cooking the chops.

Sarah. Please, m'm, yes. (*curtseys*.)

Mrs. S. And don't forget the pickled walnuts.

Sarah. Please, m'm, no. (*curtseys*.)

(SARAH JANE goes up to L. D., *curtseys and exits* — MRS. SMYLLIE rises, and crossing to table, R., sits to work, R. C.)

Rodom. (*aside at back, C.*) Chops, pickled walnuts! It must be a rival! (*comes down, L. C.*) What a missionary's wife you would have made, my dear Mrs. Smylie!

Mrs. S. (*seated, R. C.*) Well, I do think my protégées of the village school afford about as good a field for missionary labor as your friends of the Feejee Islands.

Rodom. (L. C.) Ah, what pleasure to devote one's self, with a congenial female companion, to the spread of civilization! I once thought of turning missionary myself. It was after assisting at a dog feast among the Ojibbeways.

Mrs. S. Unluckily you had not the congenial female companion.

Rodom. Precisely; my energies have been running to seed for want of one. Ah, Mrs. Smylie, what is life without sympathy! Man or woman single is like — like — (*stoops over her — she has her scissors in her hand, and nearly pricks his nose as she raises them to enforce her comparison — he starts*.)

Mrs. S. Like a single blade of a pair of scissors. It's a feminine simile, rather, but I think it expresses your meaning.

Rodom. Beautiful! I am a single blade — you — excuse me for saying so — are another; separate, we are both rusting in our sheaths — united, we should cut our way through the world like a bowie knife through a buffalo hump. (*crosses at back to R.*)

Mrs. S. A charming simile — for my blade of the scissors.

Rodom. (R.) Ah, Mrs. Smylie! believe me, such rough experience as mine awakens one to the value of a home like this.

Mrs. S. (*still seated*.) At per annum?

Rodom. No, no! (*comes down, R.*) I may have been weak and wayward — rash and reckless; but sordid I am not. I alluded to its value to the heart. Yes, since I knew you I have felt for the first time what woman is — in you — what man might be — in myself.

Mrs. S. Oh, Mr. Rollingstone! (*rites.*) This is almost a declaration. *Rodom.* Call it not almost — say quite — a declaration from the frankest of men to the most charming — the most bewitching of women. Yes, adorable Emilia, Rodomont Rollingstone has not been used to stoop, but behold him at your feet. (*kneels.*)

Mrs. S. Mr. Rollingstone, you're the second full-grown man I've seen in that posture to-day, and it isn't becoming. Get up, pray! You can say what you have to say quite as well on your legs.

Rodom. You are right! (*rising.*) We have both seen the world. In plain words, then, I love you — would marry you — would fain concentrate in this small but elegant abode energies for which, till now, two hemispheres have scarcely sufficed.

Mrs. S. Oh, dear! we should certainly have an explosion. It would be as bad as the gas blowing up.

Rodom. Do not mock my fervor. I have lived in the sunny south, where life is a fever — language a cataract — and love a lava-flow.

Mrs. S. And I begin to feel uncommonly like Pompeii just before the eruption of Vesuvius. Suppose we adjourn to the garden. Only you must promise not to scorch up my poor flowers. Come, will you give me my mantilla?

Rodom. (*taking mantilla from sofa, R.*) Let me drape it, as I have often done for the sun-gilded Senoras under the shadow of Popocatepetl. (*he puts on her mantilla — she drapes herself coquettishly.*)

Mrs. S. Eh? Popo — what?

Rodom. Popo — cata — petl — the giant mountain that looks down on Mexico. Like him, the frost of conventionalism may rest upon my brow, but the fire of the volcano is latent at my core.

Mrs. S. But mind, no explosions, or I shall positively send for the parish engine. Come, you shall be my Popo-patch-a-kettle.

[*Exeunt into garden by window, C., and off, L.*]

Enter KATIE, R. D. : she looks after them.

Katie. There goes auntie with Mr. Rollingstone. Oh! how ever can she bear to leave dear Fairfield? We have been so happy here! There's nowhere the birds sing so sweetly, and the sun shines so bright. I declare, when I get up of a morning, I feel like a bird myself, and sing, because I can't help it.

INTRODUCED SONG — KATIE.*

Enter JOHN BRITTON, at R. D.

John. This way, Mr. Ironside — don't stand upon ceremony.

* This song had better be omitted, unless it can be sung at the piano-forte as young ladies do sing, and not as is usually done on the stage in a bravura style, at the foot-lights, to an orchestral accompaniment.

Enter IRONSIDE, R. D. — he crosses down to L.

Joseph. Thank you, young man! I'm not much used to stand upon ceremony at any time, *(to himself.)* and least of all in coming into my own house. *(to KATIE.)* Good morning, Mrs. — eh? no! you can't be Mrs. Smylie!

Katie. *(R.)* Oh, dear no, sir, I'm her niece.

John. *(C.)* Miss Mapleson — Mr. Ironside. *(introducing them.)* That was Mrs. Smylie we saw in the lime walk, as we came through the garden.

Joseph. *(L.)* I suppose you take charge of the garden, young lady? I congratulate you upon it. I know something about gardens.

Katie. My aunt sees to the garden herself.

Joseph. Come, I'm glad she looks after the property, at all events. *(after pacing the room.)* A nicely-proportioned room — don't like this de-curtain style of thing though. *(pointing to chintz furniture.)* Give honest horse hair — nothing like it for wear. *(sits, L.)* Are you a relative of Mrs. Smylie's, young man? *(to JOHN.)*

John. *(R. C.)* Only a friend, Mr. Ironside, as yet.

Joseph. As yet, eh? *(rises, looking first at KATIE, then at him.)* Oh, see! Turtle doves! pairing, eh? *(KATIE turns away confused.)* Don't rush, young lady. Too many old fools fall into it for the young ones to be ashamed of themselves. Tell your aunt, young lady, that have only a few minutes to spare, and my time is precious.

John. Mrs. Smylie is in the garden! we'll send her to you. Come, Katie! *(aside.)* He is a hyena! but if your aunt doesn't tame him, all me spooney. *[Exeunt JOHN and KATIE by window, C., and off, L.]*

Joseph. *(calling after them.)* Mind, no kissing behind the bushes! silly things! like young bears, with all their troubles before them. Thank my stars, I've never put my head under any woman's apron-string. A female tenant is bad enough, but a female tenant for life — oh, Lord! *(shrugs his shoulders.)* Well, why doesn't she come? I wonder what she's like. *(goes to R. C., and sits.)* A busy, notable woman, I suppose, from what they told me at the Red Lion — with brassy face, a bright eye, and a tongue like a mill-clack. Well, she can't look me down, or talk me down either, that I promise her.

Enter MRS. SMYLIE, L. D. She has on a very becoming cap, looks demure and resigned, and in expression and manner presents a studied contrast to what she was in the former scene.

I've been put off long enough, but now we have come to a meeting, I'll stand no nonsense — out she goes! *(turns and sees MRS. SMYLIE.)*

Eh? *(aside.)* Who's this?

Mrs. S. *(L. C.)* Mr. Ironside, I believe. I am Mrs. Smylie!

Joseph. You? eh? oh, yes, I thought as much — ahem! *(embarrassed.)*

Mrs. S. Pray be seated, Mr. Ironside. *(they sit.)* I regret extremely that the agitation naturally caused by your arrival should have precluded my receiving you in person — I am stronger now. I hope my niece has done the honors of my poor cottage.

Joseph. *(aside.)* That's an opening. I beg your pardon, ma'am, you said my —

Mrs. S. Did I? (*mildly.*) Forgive me if the associations of the many years I have lived here so happily (*sighs.*) should have caused me to forget for a moment that — I — am a trespasser on your most gentlemanlike consideration.

Joseph. (*aside.*) Hang it! I wish she'd bounce a little. Why, you see, ma'am, law is law, and right is right. I hope you don't mean to persuade me that I'm a ruffian for desiring to enter into possession of my own house?

Mrs. S. (*faintly smiling.*) Such harshness of construction is very, very foreign to my nature, sir, as you will admit when you know me better; but when you take into consideration my unfriended position, how the mind, left to create its own occupations, its own pleasures, clings to every little memento of happier times, I am sure you will make some allowance for a poor weak woman, suddenly summoned to quit the scene of her many sorrows, the shrine of the few consolations which time has spared her. (*she turns away and wipes her eyes.*)

Joseph. (*aside.*) Confound her sentimentality! but she shan't wheedle me. (*to Mrs. S.*) I can make every allowance for your feelings, ma'am, as you call 'em, but when you talk of being "suddenly summoned," remember you've had nearly four months to make your arrangements.

Mrs. S. Is it possible? can it be four months since you wrote me that letter, so full of indulgence? I have, indeed, sadly encroached on your good nature.

Joseph. Pretty well, I think, ma'am. I hope I know what's due to a woman, though I haven't had much experience of the sex. However, ma'am, time is too precious a commodity with me to be wasted, so the sooner we enter on business the better.

Mrs. S. With all my heart; but you will find me a sad, helpless creature.

Joseph. Helpless! why, they tell me at the "Red Lion" you're gardener, schoolmistress, pickle-maker, and brewer — no, don't say helpless.

Mrs. S. I mean in matters of business. I believe I have some feminine accomplishments, and what accomplishments are so feminine as those that contribute to the comfort of a home and the improvement of the poor?

Joseph. Sensibly spoken. I am sure so sensible a woman won't take long to understand that her staying here any longer is out of the question.

Mrs. S. I admit that at once.

Joseph. That my rights are as clear as the sun at noonday.

Mrs. S. Believe me, my dear sir, nothing is farther from my intention than to question them.

Joseph. Confound it, ma'am, I don't want you to admit everything — I want you to be satisfied. I've brought my lawyer with me, with a copy of the will. The law, you know, is no respecter of persons, Mrs. Smylie, nor of sexes either. Justice is blind, and ought to be deaf.

Mrs. S. Happily, you are not justice. You listen to me, I see you do.

Joseph. Hang it! I can't help listening to a lady in her own house — that is — (*pauses embarrassed.*)

Mrs. S. Still less in your own. Nay, I but interpret your generous thought. (*a pause.*) My dear sir, your past kindness makes your wishes law to me. I will see your attorney.

Joseph. That's right — then I may as well go for him; (*rising.*) and deuced glad I am to get away — she'd soft sawder a Poor-Law Guardian. Eh? where's my hat?

Mrs. S. One moment, my dear Mr. Ironside. Come, (*winningly.*) you will not refuse me one little moment, (*he pauses irresolutely.*) I am sure you will not. (*coaxingly.*) I am not so very formidable. I have had so few friends, is it any wonder I should cling to those whom kind fortune offers me?

Joseph. (*aside.*) Confound her coaxing look! Well, ma'am, what is it? (*sits down again.*) I'm at your service!

Mrs. S. (*sits.*) Oh, I'm sure you are, in spite of the affected roughness of your voice and manner. You feel for me, dear Mr. Ironside! Indeed — indeed, I have need of sympathy! (*claps her hands, and looks tearfully in his face.*)

Joseph. Well, ma'am, I'll give you what I have got — sorry I'm so short of the article. What do you want?

Mrs. S. Only a little time to prepare myself for a great struggle. When do you wish me to go?

Joseph. Whenever you please — but I should say the sooner the better — nothing like short partings.

Mrs. S. True, too true. How well you know the secrets of the heart!

Joseph. (*aside.*) The deuce I do!

Mrs. S. I hope you will not think a week too long. I have so many things to wean myself from — the birds I have trained to come at my call — the flowers I have planted — the bees I have watched at their summer labors — even the hens in the poultry yard have become as friends to me.

Joseph. I'll give you time enough for a good cry over every new laid egg in the roost.

Mrs. S. Ah, if you knew what deep roots even trees and flowers, and dumb things can strike into a female heart, you would pity me, instead of laughing at me! Indeed — indeed, you would! (*turns away as in tears.*)

Joseph. (*soothingly.*) There — don't cry, my dear Mrs. Smylie — I can't bear to see a woman's cry! Hang it — I'm not used to it! Come, dry your eyes, do. You shall have a fortnight.

Mrs. S. (*through her tears.*) Oh, thanks — thanks!

Joseph. A month.

Mrs. S. (*through her tears, as before.*) Oh, this is too much!

Joseph. Confound it! Well, now — I'll give you to the end of the quarter.

Mrs. S. Most generous — kindest — best of men! Forgive the emotion that chokes the expression of my gratitude. I shall be better soon, and then you will let me thank you as I ought. Promise me you will.

Joseph. Yes, yes. (*rises.*) Compose yourself! There, go and dry your eyes, and wash your face — and —

(MRS. SMYLIE indulges in a fresh burst of emotion, and suddenly retires into room, L., after pantomime expressive of her inability to speak.)

Confound the woman! She fairly threw me off my balance! W— would have thought it would have affected her so much? Perhaps— have been too rough with her! After all the good she's done in place too — and she certainly admitted my rights at once! I was i hopes she would have stormed — or at least, argued the point! H— is a man to hit at a petticoat, when it offers no resistance? She's a very pretty woman, too! (*shaking his head.*) Joe Ironside, I think you'd better have staid away, and trusted this business to your lawyer. (*pauses, and looks at Mrs. Smylie's portrait, L.*) I'll go and fetch Cunningham. (*going, R. — sees ROLLINGSTONE.*)

Enter ROLLINGSTONE, through window, C., and down, L.

Eh? Whom have we here? (*goes down, R.*)

Rodom. (L., aside.) So, the welcome guest! Eh? — if it isn't old Ironside, of Rochdale!

Joseph. (R., aside.) I've seen that face before! Yes, it's the rascal that tried to do me out of that lot of gray shirtings.

Rodom. (aside.) Nothing like brass! (*going up to him.*) My dear Mr. Ironside — you recollect me — Rollingstone, you know. Who would have thought of seeing you south of the Trent?

Joseph. Eh, Master Rollingstone? — better than meeting you north on't, when it comes to ordering goods, at all events.

Rodom. Ah, you allude to that affair of the shirts for the body-guard of his Majesty, the King of the Mosquito Shore — a large order, which your fatal want of confidence prevented you from executing. My dear sir, if you knew what you had lost —

Joseph. Any way, lad — it's something to know what I haven't lost — and that's the price of the goods.

Rodom. (seating himself on back of chair.) But, my dear sir, consider the splendid opening for trade — a fine, athletic population, in a state of absolute nudity, shrieking for shirts and unmentionables — the mills of Rochdale crying aloud for customers.

Joseph. (R.) And the mill owners crying louder for brass down, good bills, or a satisfactory reference. Now, as you didn't offer brass down — as your bills were queer, and your references t'other side of satisfactory, I thought it best to decline the order.

Rodom. (L.) Which has since been executed to my entire satisfaction by a more enterprising firm.

Joseph. I wish 'em joy of their customer. I hope his Mosquito Majesty was pretty well when you heard of him last!

Rodom. Thank you, he's as well as a potentate with British protectors on the one side, and American fillibusters on the other, can be expected to be. But I had no idea you were a friend of our excellent hostess, Mrs. Smylie — that it was for you she was making such preparations! I shall scold her for not letting me into the secret.

Joseph. Do, lad, do!

Rodom. Charming woman, isn't she?

Joseph. D'ye think so, lad? d'ye think so?

Rodom. Nice, snug little property this! (*surveying it.*)

Joseph. Uncommon.

Rodom. Improvable, isn't it?

Joseph. Well, I do think it is, lad.

Rodom. Ah, close files, you north countrymen.

Joseph. Well, we arn't counted fools in a general way!

Rodom. Don't think I'm curious—but as I'm a very particular friend of hers, may I inquire what you're up to? (*standing with his hands on his knees.*)

Joseph. (*imitating his manner.*) Well, you may inquire, as you're a particular friend of hers—but as you ain't a particular friend of mine, I shan't tell you. (*rises.*) So good morning! (*going up, R.*) And give my best respects to the King of the Mosquitos the next time you write to him. [*Exit, R. D.*]

Rodom. (*follows him up to door, then returns to C.*) Confound his low-bred familiarity! He's after the widow—I know he is—I see it in the grin of triumph on his mahogany figure-head. But I flatter myself I know when I've sent home my harpoon—and it shan't be this lubberly cotton-spinner that shall prevent me from hauling my fish safe alongside.

Enter JOHN BRITTON, R. D.

Well, Britton! I've seen the welcome guest—turns out to be an old acquaintance of mine.

John. (*down, R.*) My dear fellow, he's come after the widow!

Rodom. Trust an old digger to nose any rascal that means to stick a spade into his claim.

John. Ah, you're terrible chaps, you diggers! What do you mean to do?

Rodom. If we were at Ballarat, I could show you two short cuts. (*imitates action of stabbing and shooting.*)

John. You don't mean—

Rodom. Bowie knife or revolver! "You stakes your carcass, my little dear, and you takes your choice!" But in this confounded old country there's society and law, besides an infernally inquisitive police. But if I can't lynch him, at least I can bully him off the premises. I'll challenge him—you shall take the message!

John. Done! I know nothing about challenges, except challenging a jury—but you'll put me up to it—I dare say you've fought a duel before this.

Rodom. Fought a duel! I don't think there's a weapon used in single combat, from penknives to six-shooters, but I have employed with deadly effect. I'm not a boastful man, John Britton, but if there is one thing I pride myself upon, it is the affair of honor. (*aside.*) He'll never stand fire—cotton is notoriously incombustible! (*to JOHN.*) Come along! I'll put you up to delivering a cartel.

[*Exit by window, C., to garden, off L.*]

John. (*R., putting on his gloves.*) Capital! If we can only make Ironside beat a retreat! In law, as in war, time's everything! Then if Ironside turns out a fire-eater, by Jove, I believe Rollingstone will make himself scarce—or best of all, suppose each frightened away the other! It would be a case of the Kilkenny Cats, minus the fighting.

Enter SARAH JANE, R. D., showing in MR. IRONSIDE.

Joseph. Tell Mrs. Smylie Mr. Cunningham is here.

Sarah. Please, sir — yes!

[*Exit, L. D.*]

Joseph. Now, this way, Cunningham.

Enter CUNNINGAME, R. D.

I want you to explain the will to her. You say it makes out my rights as clear as daylight?

Cunning. (R.) Ah! I hope so — but do you know, Mr. Ironside, I heard something at the Red Lion just now —

Joseph. (L. C.) Eh?

Cunning. It appears testatrix's next of kin has turned up — the vagabond nephew, Rollingstone — you remember she once said something about a will in his favor.

Joseph. A nephew, eh? The chap I met this morning — this accounts for his pumping me.

Cunning. Bless me, Mr. Ironside! you never allowed yourself to be pumped?

Joseph. Working the handle is one thing — getting water is another! Trust me for keeping my own counsel.

Cunning. Perhaps, while I am with the widow, you might as well try and find out what this nephew is really after.

Joseph. I will — don't be harsh with her, Cunningham. (*pauses.*) She's a poor, helpless sort of body, and the least bullying upsets her. (*pauses again.*) So be gentle — but firm — firm — and don't let her wheedle you.

Cunning. Wheedle me! Mr. Ironside, I've had a large experience of the sex in general, and widows in particular. The late Mrs. Cunningham was a widow when I married her! That estimable woman spent the best part of our wedded life in trying to wheedle me, (*pauses.*) but without effect. I have reason to think the disappointment accelerated her end.

Joseph. Well, the proverb says — "Where there's a will there's a way" — you've got the will! (*tapping Cunningham's papers.*) find the way as you best can.

[*Exit, R. D.*]

Cunning. Now for a formidable array of papers! (*unfolds his papers.*) I have observed the sex have a horror of documents.

Enter MRS. SMYLLIE, L. D., with a paper in her hand — her manner throughout this scene is a contrast from that assumed during her interview with IRONSIDE — she is alert, brisk, and determined — CUNNINGAME places chair L. of R. table for MRS. SMYLLIE — she sits — he then goes to R. of table, and sits.

Mrs. S. Ah, Mr. Cunningham! Mr. Ironside prepared me for a very formidable interview. But I can't think there can be anything in this case really difficult for two clear heads.

Cunning. Why, my dear madam, as you expressed in your letters such a total inability to comprehend the commonest legal phraseology —

Mrs. S. Oh, I've been studying the law of wills since then, Mr. Cunningame! I've found it so entertaining you can't think!

Cunning. No — really —

Mrs. S. Do you know, I fancy the law must be the most delightful of professions!

Cunning. So I always say, my dear madam, when silly people talk of it as dull and dry — so the sooner we go into the papers the better. (*opens his papers.*)

Mrs. S. I have a copy of the will and codicil, you know — I've noted a few points here, on which I think we may require a little discussion. (*looks at paper.*)

Cunning. (*aside.*) A helpless sort of a body! What could Mr. Ironside be thinking of? She's evidently a most superior woman! (*to Mrs. S.*) Our title, my dear madam, as you are probably aware, rests on the will of the late Mrs. Jane Weathercock, duly executed and dated August 18th, one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight.

Mrs. S. I may have a word to say about that by and by — but let me hear your case.

Cunning. There is — *inter alia* — a devise by the testatrix to her dear and faithful friend, Mrs. Emilia Smylie, widow, &c., &c., of a certain messuage or tenement, called or known by the name of "Fairfield Cottage," with the curtilage, yards, gardens, tenements —

Mrs. S. Pass over the pigsties!

Cunning. Which devise is, as you are aware, revoked by a codicil —

Mrs. S. I admit execution of codicil — go on!

Cunning. Then we come to the revocation of the entire will!

Mrs. S. I admit that, too!

Cunning. Then the next step in the case is the revival of the will, without express declaration of intention to revive gift to legatee, so that the codicil revoking your legacy still remains operative, and you are thus, by clear course of law, ousted of all right to Fairfield Cottage.

Mrs. S. Your exposition of the case is most masterly — at the same time you are aware that this revocation was against the intention of testatrix.

Cunning. Oh, intention — (*contemptuously.*) that is quite admitted.

Mrs. S. So that my claim, being defeated by technical operation of law, you will grant I am justified in employing the technicalities of law to defend myself.

Cunning. My dear madam, I admit that at once — nothing can be fairer. (*aside.*) She's a most superior woman, and uncommonly good-looking into the bargain.

Mrs. S. Now, suppose, Mr. Cunningame — I say suppose — it were my attention to dispute the will altogether.

Cunning. Dispute the will? But how, my dear madam — on what point?

Mrs. S. The statute 1 Vic., cap. 25, directs that testator's name is to be signed at the foot or end of the will. Now, if you examine the original document at Doctors' Commons, as I have done, you will see there is at least two inches between the last word of the will and the signature. You are aware it has been held in the leading case of *Quillet v. Quirk*, that the leaving such a space was not in compliance with the statute, and the will was therefore void.

Cunning. (*aside.*) She's hit the blot! Really, my dear madam, I was not prepared for this. But suppose you do defeat the will, the heir-at-law would step in, as in case of intestacy. You won't take anything.

Mrs. S. He would probably be too glad to carry out the intentions of the testatrix by leaving me in quiet possession of the cottage.

Cunning. My dear madam, I can only say, if he did, it would be a most proper return for your acuteness in taking the point.

Mrs. S. You admit there's something in it, then?

Cunning. Something in it? If I were not acting as attorney for Mr. Ironside, I should say that it was a monstrous strong point indeed.

Mrs. S. Ah, Mr. Cunningame, why are you Mr. Ironside's solicitor, instead of mine — not for this suit as to the validity of the will, merely — though that would be a long business.

Cunning. I believe you! Why, it would be in the Ecclesiastical Court, you know. (*aside.*) Costs enormous, and payable out of the estate — a thousand pounds at least in my pocket.

Mrs. S. We should probably have other legal proceedings growing out of this.

Cunning. Not a doubt of it! a whole harvest of issues raised, perhaps — who knows, a bill in chancery, perhaps.

Mrs. S. Nothing more likely. I should certainly set up an equitable claim to the cottage, if the nephew failed to acquiesce in my possession. Need I say how gladly I would avail myself of your services as my solicitor?

Cunning. My dear madam — (*aside.*) A chancery suit! my fortune would be made!

Mrs. S. Our business intercourse would be so different from the usual dry, distant dealing of attorney and client. With our congeniality of disposition, our relish for legal discussion — but I forget, the difference of our sexes makes any further dwelling on this aspect of the case unbecoming.

Cunning. By no means, my dear Mrs. Smylie. On the contrary, there is nothing in the prospect you have so suddenly opened which so much tempts me as the intimate relations it would establish between us. (*drawing his chair a little closer.*)

Mrs. S. Oh, Mr. Cunningame! you mustn't flatter a poor weak woman — our heads are so soon turned.

Cunning. It would take a deal of flattery to turn your head, my dear madam. But you really have put this business, in which I have been acting for Mr. Ironside, in quite a new light. I see now how odious his position is — how much you are to be pitied, as well as admired. (*moves his chair still closer, after looking cautiously round.*) Between ourselves, the position of the signature of testatrix is not the only flaw in the will. I have reason to believe, it could be proved that the testatrix turned round in bed just as the last witness signed, so that the will wasn't signed in her *presence*, as the law most properly requires. I have no doubt I shall be able to find out other weak points on careful inspection.

Mrs. S. Ah, if you were not hampered by your confidential position with regard to Mr. Ironside —

Cunning. (*rising.*) Madam, the tie of attorney and client, happily

for the interests of justice and humanity, is not indissoluble. I owe something to Mr. Ironside, but more to my own conscience — more to my feeling for you, my dear madam — something even to my professional interests, which may be so much advanced by acting for the defendant, if I may be allowed the expression, instead of the plaintiff. In short, my dear Mrs. Smylie, (*Mrs. SMYLIE rises.*) if I only felt that you would smile approval on my efforts, that the services of the attorney might not be unavailing to plead for the man —

Mrs. S. (blushing and looking down.) Really, my dear Mr. Cunningham —

Cunning. I understand that blush, my dear madam. (*she smiles.*) That smile — what could it not accomplish with Nathaniel Cunningham! (*seizing up his papers.*) Let what has passed between us be considered strictly confidential — I will look over the papers again, and let you know of any more defects I may discover in Mr. Ironside's most iniquitous title.

Mrs. S. You'll find a retired summer-house in the garden, Mr. Cunningham —

Cunning. Till then, adieu, most intelligent, most interesting, most ill-used of women! (*goes up towards window, c., then aside.*) The third Mrs. Cunningham — and worth the other two put together!

[*Exit, c., and off L.*]

Mrs. S. Victory! Thanks to mother wit, and John Britton's lesson. Never was so little law made to go such a long way. Cerberus has bolted his sop — his bark is silenced, and his bite disarmed! The treacherous old monster! And he positively ventures to ingraft love on law, too. No, no, Mr. Cunningham. I demur to your declaration decidedly. Poor, dear Mr. Ironside; with all his roughness, his heart is in the right place. I quite pity him. With Mr. Cunningham for his friend and Mrs. Smylie for his enemy, he's between two fires, and I hardly know which is the hottest.

Enter SARAH JANE, R. D.

Sarah. Mr. Ironside, please, m'm —

Mrs. S. Very well! (*looking out of window.*) Yonder sits the old fox in the arbor. Shall I unmask him at once? Ah! here comes Mr. Rollingstone — what shall I do? I can't receive him and Mr. Ironside together — their two Mrs. Smylies are such very different people. Still there would be no harm if the one saw the other in the act of adoration. (*to SARAH JANE, who is up at back, R.*) Show in Mr. Ironside!

Sarah. Yes, please, m'm.

[*Exit, R. D.*]

Enter ROLLINGSTONE from the garden, c. from L.

Mrs. S. (L.) Ah, Rod — Mr. Rollingstone!

Rodom. (coming down, R.) Say Rodomont, and let me say Emilia. Yes, hear me renew the vows which the arrival of that intruder interrupted this morning — thus at your feet — (*he kneels.*)

Enter IRONSIDE, R. D.

Mrs. S. (seeing IRONSIDE.) Oh, goodness gracious! (*she gives a*

faint scream, and runs off into her room, L. D. — ROLLINGSTONE rises and sits with his chair reversed, L. C.)

Joseph. (up the stage, R. — aside.) The nephew on his knees to the widow — the impudent rascal! *(coming down, R.)* Sorry to interrupt your tête-à-tête, young man — I expected to find Mrs. Smylie in conversation with a lawyer, not a lover.

Rodom. (L., aside.) My rival! You must perceive, Mr. Ironside, you are rather too late in the field. I think when you know what are my pretensions in this quarter —

Joseph. I've just been making inquiry, (a pause.) and know all about 'em.

Rodom. In that case, I think the best thing you can do is to quit the field.

Joseph. D'ye think so? And give you up possession, eh? (sits, R. C.)

Rodom. Precisely my meaning.

Joseph. Then I tell you I shan't do anything of the kind — I don't value your pretensions that — *(snapping his finger and thumb.)*

Rodom. Beware, old man! The party who interferes in my diggings must take the consequences.

Joseph. I'm ready for 'em. We'll see which cries peccavi first.

Rodom. Then I beg to refer you to my friend, John Britton. Doomed cotton spinner, you little know the man you have defied!

[Exit, C., and off L.]

Joseph. Doomed puppy! John Britton? That's the young lawyer I met here this morning. So, the nephew means to contest the will, does he — very well! Ah, here comes Cunningame!

Enter CUNNINGAME, C., and down L.

(R.) Just the man I wanted. Well, this Rollingstone means to fight us. He's to send his lawyer. You receive him here? *(rises.)*

Cunning. (L.) Hadn't you better stay and hear their case?

Joseph. No; set a thief to catch a thief, you know — lawyer to lawyers all fair. You talk to him; I'll go and walk in the garden till you've had your palaver out. *(going up C., CUNNINGAME crosses to R.)*

Re-enter JOHN BRITTON, C. from L., meeting IRONSIDE.

John. (L. C.) Mr. Ironside, I come, as Mr. Rollingstone's friend —

Joseph. (C.) I know your business; talk to my friend here. *(pointing to CUNNINGAME.)* I leave everything to him. *[Exit C., off L.]*

Cunning. (R., aside.) The nephew's legal adviser.

John. (C., aside.) Mr. Ironside's friend. So, sir, it seems you have full authority to settle everything for Mr. Ironside — so have I for Mr. Rollingstone. Where two directly contrary claims are set up, I'm afraid apology, compromise, or arrangement is quite out of the question.

Cunning. I'm quite of your opinion, sir; the matter must be settled by action.

John. Exactly my friend's wish, and the sooner the better.

Cunning. Of course you'll take the first step, as you mean to contest the lady's will.

John. On the contrary, we say the lady's will is distinctly in our favor.

Cunning. I have the instruments all ready. (*goes up to table, and opens his bag.*)

John. Why, he can't have got the pistols in that blue bag.

Cunning. You don't mean to pretend you've an instrument anterior to this of the eighteenth of August, one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight, on which my client rests his claim?

John. Mr. Ironside rests his claim to Mrs. Smylie's hand on an instrument dated the 18th of August, 1848?

Cunning. His claim to Mrs. Smylie's hand?

John. Yes, that claim which my friend is determined to resist; for which purpose he sent me here to settle with you the time and place.

Cunning. Of a trial at law?

John. No, of a trial by battle.

Cunning. A duel! and you a lawyer? Oh, sir, I blush for you.

John. What — you won't fight?

Cunning. Won't we, though? but it must be with the proper legal instruments — as much parchment as you like, but no powder and shot.

John. But who ever heard of two rivals settling their claims to a lady's hand by an action at law?

Cunning. But we don't set up any claim to the lady's hand. It's the cottage we want, with curtilage, lands, gardens, closes, orchards, tenements, and hereditaments thereunto appertaining and belonging.

John. And it's the lady *we* want — with the caps, bonnets, flounces, fallals, and crinolines, thereunto appertaining and belonging. I must explain this mistake to my principal.

Cunning. Do, sir, by all means. I'll manage to satisfy him out of my blue bag. (*goes to table, and rummages bag.*)

John. (*aside.*) I promised Mrs. Smylie I wouldn't tell Rollingstone the cottage wasn't hers — Cunningham shall, and then he'll vanish, I know. Here he comes!

Enter ROLLINGSTONE, through window, from L., down L.

(c.) My dear Rollingstone, we're in error here. Mr. Ironside's friend and legal adviser has just explained to me that that gentleman has no pretensions to the hand of Mrs. Smylie.

Cunning. (R.) Certainly not! We only wish to get possession of this cottage.

Rodom. (L.) Possession of this cottage — eh? By what right?

Cunning. The right of ownership. My client claims the cottage as residuary legatee under your aunt's will.

Rodom. Why, you don't mean to say that this cottage is not Mrs. Smylie's property?

Cunning. Certainly not.

Rodom. (*aside.*) Eh, John — is this true?

John. I'm afraid it is! I thought you knew all about it!

Rodom. (aside.) A precious fool I've been making of myself! Pray what did Mrs. Smylie inherit from the elderly Weathercock?

John. Nothing at all. Mrs. Smylie's fortune is six hundred pounds a year, derived from property left in trust for her by her late husband.

Rodom. (aside.) Six hundred a year! Come, that's not bad, neither.

Cunning. (aside.) A nice little income!

John. But which she forfeits if she marries again.

Cunning. (aside.) Oh, dear!

Rodom. (aside.) The deuce she does!

Cunning. (aside.) But there's the connection.

Rodom. (aside.) My dear Britton, are you certain of that?

John. Yes, she showed me the clause in the will of the late lamented Smylie. Ah, how gratifying it must be to know that no one can attribute your advances to a mercenary motive.

Rodom. Yes, highly gratifying—amazingly gratifying! But still, a fellow should think twice before he compromises the future of such a woman. You know money-making has not been my object in life, Britton. I have been where the dross is dug, my dear fellow—and I know how much dirt you must go through to get at it. Inclination says, "marry her," but duty—duty—duty shakes its head, and—I'll just smoke a cigar, till duty and inclination have settled the point between them. *[Exit into garden, L. C.]*

John. (crossing to R., aside.) Bravo! We've got rid of Don Whiskerandos.

Cunning. (L. C.) A mercenary party that, I'm afraid, Mr. Britton.

John. Decidedly. Mrs. Smylie may be grateful for her escape!

Enter IRONSIDE, through window, L. C.

Joseph. (coming down, c.) Well, have you two lawyers had your wrangle out?

Cunning. (L.) It's all a mistake, sir. Mr. Rollingstone doesn't set up any claim to the property. He was after the widow, and thought you were his rival.

Joseph. (awkwardly.) Me—his rival!—me! Pooh—pooh! Poor woman! I saw how matters were, when I caught him at her feet just now. Why, the fellow's little better than a swindler! Somebody should open her eyes—it would be a thousand pities such a kind, good, amiable creature should throw herself away on a vagabond like this!

Cunning. So it would.

Joseph. (to JOHN.) Do you think she likes him?

John. I hope not—but there's no saying, with ladies of a certain age—*(shaking his head.)* you know. Ah, sir, if you would only speak to her—she has such a respect for you.

Joseph. (interested.) Has she?

John. I never heard a woman speak of a man in terms of more regard than she did of you this afternoon—of your kindness—your considerateness.

Joseph. Well, well, well! *(flattered.)* No occasion to repeat all her nonsense, poor thing! But if I can expose this fellow—

Enter MRS. SMYLIE, L. D.

John. Here is Mrs. Smylie. Come along, Mr. Cunningham — let's leave Mr. Ironside to deal with her.

Cunning. (*aside.*) Oh, there can't be any danger from him!

[*Exeunt JOHN BRITTON and CUNNINGAME through window, off L. C.*]

Mrs. S. (L.) Oh, Mr. Ironside, what must you think of me? I blush to see you, after — (*she pauses, embarrassed.*)

Joseph. (R.) After being caught with a man kneeling at your feet, eh? It's not the lady who ought to blush on these occasions. Make no apologies, ma'am — men will make fools of themselves — and what's worse — men will make fools of you!

Mrs. S. Ah, Mr. Ironside — we are the slaves of our affections!

Joseph. And the victims of our rascality. My dear Mrs. Smylie — we are but recent acquaintances, and perhaps you may think my interference in your affairs impertinent.

Mrs. S. Oh, no — believe me — I take it as a proof of your interest in me.

Joseph. Then will you allow me to ask if that young man has proposed to you?

Mrs. S. (blushing.) Yes.

Joseph. And you have accepted him?

Mrs. S. You came in at such a critical moment.

Joseph. I'm glad of it, if it stopped your "Yes!" Depend upon it, my dear Mrs. Smylie, you had better not let this matter go further — this man will not make you happy.

Mrs. S. Do not say that, dear Mr. Ironside — do not add weight to the ominous whispers of my own heart.

Joseph. Eh? Then you have had your doubts of him?

Mrs. S. Alas! too many.

Joseph. Then may I ask how you came to encourage him — to let him go so far?

Mrs. S. Oh, sir, need you ask the question? Am I not a woman — without a friend — without a counsellor — without a home.

Joseph. Don't say without a friend. Sit down — I beg of you — sit down — I'm a rough man — but I can assure you that you will always find a friend in me. (*he places chair, C. — they sit.*) And as for a home — Lord save us! you're very comfortable here!

Mrs. S. (L.) Yes, while you generously allow me the shelter of your roof. But in a week from this time I must go forth alone, to battle with the world — to take root as best I may, in cold and unfamiliar soil. It's a chilly prospect to a woman, Mr. Ironside, to one who needs a strong arm to lean on — a clear head to guide — a loving voice to counsel her. These are what we look for in a husband.

Joseph. And do you suppose you'll find them in this vagabond?

Mrs. S. We women have a power of hoping, even against hope — at least, he will give me a home — and I will try to make it so cheerful, and so bright for him, that he must needs love me — a — little. (*timidly.*)

Joseph. (moving closer to her.) By Jove, if he isn't a scoundrel he'll

love you a great deal. But I'm afraid he's a mercenary dog — that ~~he~~ seeks you for your fortune —

Mrs. S. I forfeit it by marriage. But I am willing to risk poverty for a home and a husband.

Joseph. A home — which, do what you will, he may make miserable, squalid, and comfortless.

Mrs. S. It will still be home.

Joseph. A husband who may turn out selfish, sulky, a swearer, a sot —

Mrs. S. He will still be my husband.

Joseph. But consider, my dear madam — you're throwing yourself away, and on a fellow who won't appreciate, much less repay, the sacrifice. If you must marry, madam, surely, with your good looks — your attractiveness — your intelligence, you might get a better husband than this vagabond. Wait, ma'am, wait — look about you — you'll see — (*rises.*) something will turn up.

Mrs. S. Ah! do not flatter me! at my age the chance does not come so often that we can hope to choose. But you have kindly given me a warning, (*rises.*) let me give you one in return. Beware of your attorney!

Joseph. Cunningame!

Mrs. S. He is ready to betray *your* interests whenever and wherever he may think it *his* interest to do so.

Joseph. The deuce he is! (*slapping his thigh.*) I always hated law and lawyers! But how did you find this out?

Mrs. S. In my interview with him just now. You know we women are quick to read characters. By addressing myself to his cupidity, his hopes of litigation, I drew him on till he not only admitted all the weak points my lawyer had pointed out in your case, but set himself diligently to work to find out new ones.

Joseph. The rascal! why, he said there were no weak points in my case.

Mrs. S. I fear there are.

Joseph. Fear? you mean you are glad of it?

Mrs. S. Why should I be? I do not intend to avail myself of them. I have already trespassed long enough on your generosity, without putting you to the costly delays of law. No, no, in a week from this, I will go forth — homeless, but hopeful; and whether alone, or on a husband's arm, now and ever grateful to you, my dear Mr. Ironside, for all your past kindness, and for your present counsel; so now we are quits — warning for warning. Good-by, good-by! (*offers him her hand — he takes it mechanically, and holds it a moment, grasping it hard.*)

Joseph. Good-by! (*pauses.*)

Mrs. S. Have you anything more to say?

Joseph. No, no! (*Mrs. SMYLLIE looks towards her hand, which he is still holding, he kisses it — she goes up towards L. D., stops and turns.*) But, Mrs. —

Mrs. S. Eh?

Joseph. No — nought. [*Exit Mrs. SMYLLIE, L. D.*] (*after a pause, and looking at Mrs. SMYLLIE's picture, L.*) Oh, if I only durst! Was there

ever such a noble, disinterested creature! Instead of taking advantage of this fellow's rascality, she puts me on my guard against it! And how touching it was to hear her talk of home in that way. What a home she'd make. What a charming place she has made of this, though she hadn't a husband to work for! Oh, dear! oh, dear! why didn't I know her ten years ago? It is too late now — for me, I mean — not for her. I wouldn't have her a day younger. And to think of a jewel like this being thrown away upon a swine like Rollingstone! At all events, she shan't be driven to it by want of a home. (*striking table.*) I'll settle this cottage upon her, and the Elmhurst Farm besides. (*sits, R. C.*) It's a big gift, but it mun be done.

Enter KATIE, R. D.

My dear, go and find young Britton — bring him here directly.

Katie. Yes, Mr. Ironside — he's in the garden. (*aside.*) How very kindly he spoke to me. [*Exit KATIE through window and off, L.*]

Joseph. Yes, he shall draw a deed of gift — short and simple — if the law will allow of such a thing.

Re-enter KATIE, with JOHN BRITTON, from L. C.

Sit down here and draw me a deed of gift of this cottage and the Elmhurst Farm, as brief as you can make it. I suppose you lawyers can be short sometimes.

John. (sits at table, L.) I'll turn you out a conveyance that would delight the Law Amendment Society, and throw an old equity draughtsman into convulsions. (*writes.*)

Katie. (L. C.) Giving away the cottage! (*fiercely.*) Well, but, sir, it isn't yours to give.

Joseph. (seated, R. C.) What, do you mean to dispute my rights, wench?

Katie. No, but auntie does.

Joseph. Before you get into a passion, my dear young lady, whom do you think I mean to give it to? Guess!

Katie. Oh, I shan't do anything of the kind.

Joseph. Try — try!

Katie. I shan't.

John. What name shall I insert?

Joseph. This young lady's aunt — Mrs. Smylie — I don't know her Christian name.

Katie. Auntie! What, do you really mean to give auntie the cottage. Oh, how dear — how darling of you. Oh, I wish you'd let me give you a hearty smack.

Joseph. Do, my dear! come along, I've no objection. (*KATIE leaps on his neck and kisses him.*)

John. Katie! now, sir! (*remonstrating.*) Here you are, short and sweet.

Joseph. (taking paper, and reading it.) This is the first piece of lawyer's writing I ever understood in my life.

John. Now, if you'll execute the deed, put your finger here, and say, "I deliver this as my act and deed."

Joseph. (*signs, &c.*) "I deliver this as my act and deed." (*goes to C.*)

John. We'll witness it! (*JOHN and KATIE sign paper — JOHN gives paper to JOSEPH.*)

Joseph. You give Mrs. Smylie the deed — say it was Joe Ironside parting present.

John. (*c.*) But you'll see her — you'll let her thank you?

Joseph. No, no, I'd rather not. (*crosses to R. c.*) The sooner I'm out of this the better, (*aside.*) or I shall be sticking here for life. (*shakes hands with JOHN, goes up, c., then stops — to KATIE.*) You may take another smack, if you like. (*she does so.*) She's very like her aunt. [*Exit hastily by window, off R.*]

Katie. (*hugging JOHN BRITTON.*) Oh, my dear John! I am so happy!

John. (*L. c.*) Yes! and happiness with you seems at once to translate itself into hugging! It's all very well when I'm the huggee, but the promiscuous practice is objectionable.

Katie. Oh! but I am so happy — I could hug anybody — (*ROLLINGSTONE appears at window, c. from R., and listens.*) Even that horrid Mr. Rollingstone!

John. Mind, he mustn't know that old Ironside has given the cottage and Elmhurst Farm to your aunt, or he'll be renewing his addresses to her — I've had no end of trouble in getting rid of him!

Katie. The mercenary wretch! I hate him!

John. Let's take the deed to your aunt — how happy it will make her — and I say, Katie, we can get spliced directly!

[*Exeunt JOHN BRITTON and KATIE, L. D.*]

Enter ROLLINGSTONE, C.

Rodom. So the widow will have the cottage after all — and a farm into the bargain! I wonder how she gammoned old Ironside out of the deed! So, Master John, you flatter yourself Rodomont Rollingstone is out of the betting, eh? I'll show you this chief is still upon the hunting path. Everything's open — I may still pop with a disinterested countenance. (*he retires up, R. c.*) Here she is!

Enter MRS. SMYLIE, L. D., and crosses to R.

Mrs. S. How little I expected this! And this is the man I thought a pleasant sport to trifle with in masquerade — the man I imagined a sordid and selfish enemy! How much the nobler he is of us two.

Rodom. (*aside, up L. c.*) Come — I can't stand any more of this! (*comes forward, L.*) My Emilia!

Mrs. S. Mr. Rollingstone!

Rodom. Mr. — what has become of the Rodomont of this morning? Why this coldness — this constraint?

Mrs. S. John Britton has informed me of what passed between you a quarter of an hour ago — your discovery that I was not mistress of this cottage — and your very intelligible change of tone thereupon. It was natural — you thought you were courting a substantial freeholder —

Rodom. Emilia, can you believe your Rodomont influenced by motives so sordid? No! He asked your hand when he believed you rich — he asks it still, now he knows you are poor.

Mrs. S. (aside.) I'll test him! You are sincere in this?

Rodom. Does not this renewal of my offer prove it? Oh, grant my request, and make me the happiest of men!

Mrs. S. Rodomont, I am not so poor as you think me. I hold a deed of gift of this cottage, and a farm besides, from Mr. Ironside. Look! here it is. (*takes out deed.*)

Enter IRONSIDE, from garden, R. C., and remains at back.

Joseph. (aside.) I can't leave the place without seeing her. Eh! that vagabond still here!

Rodom. (L.) Is it possible! (*looking at deed.*) Signed — sealed — witnessed! Ah, it's lucky I was not informed of this sooner! Now, none can call me sordid. Emilia, I love you not for house or land, I love you for yourself alone!

Mrs. S. Oh, how glad I am to know it! Yes, Rodomont, you wooed me poor — you must win me penniless! None shall be able to throw doubt on the unselfishness of your love. (*about to tear up deed.*)

Joseph. (aside, at back.) Bravo!

Rodom. (aside.) Confound it! Don't, Emilia! don't be rash — what are you about? Would you deprive yourself of a valuable property in this absurd way?

Mrs. S. Yes! Thus do I renounce Mr. Ironside's gift! (*tears up deed into small pieces.*)

Rodom. Do you mean this?

Mrs. S. I do!

Rodom. Honor — bright?

Mrs. S. Yes, my Rodomont! for your sake.

Rodom. But I won't take advantage of your sacrifice! I, too, have some generosity about me. By what right should I link a gentle, delicately-nurtured woman to my wild and wandering fortunes! No! With the cottage to reside in — a farm to cultivate — perhaps you might have fettered me; but once loose upon the world, and the torrent will have its rush, the wild horse his boundless prairie, and his free pasturage. No, Emilia! take an older — a tamer — a less romantic mate. There's old Ironside — you've torn up his deed of gift — but you might find it a good spec to invest your affections in his three per cents.

Mrs. S. Mr. Rollingstone, you will oblige me by not ridiculing a generosity you cannot comprehend, and indulging your very questionable wit upon qualities we might, both of us, with greater advantage, have more of. (*crosses to L. C.*) I respect Mr. Ironside's name too much to allow it to be bandied between us.

Rodom. As you please — only I thought as you had evidently hooked the old gentleman, you couldn't do better than land him.

Mrs. S. Mr. Rollingstone, you are impertinent! Mr. Ironside has no affection for me. (*IRONSIDE comes forward, L.*) Mr. Ironside! you here!

Joseph. (L.) That's the first wrong thing you've said since I've been listening to you. Joe Ironside has an affection for you, more than he thought he ever could have for any woman. You began —

Mrs. S. By an unworthy deception — by assuming a weakness and helplessness I did not feel.

Joseph. (L. c.) I was a rhinoceros! Nothing less would have gone through my hide. But, however you began, you have ended in earnest, and in earnest Joe Ironside offers you his hand. I'm rough, and hard —

Mrs. S. But not hard *here!* (*indicating his heart.*)

Joseph. You accept? (*Mrs. SMYLLIE takes his hand.*) I say, young chap, don't you think you had better go and offer your valuable services to the King of the Mosquitos?

Rodom. (R., *seated on table.*) I go to the happy hunting grounds — there are widows as fat and as fair in other prairies! I will strike one, and eat meat!

Enter CUNNINGAME, from window, L. c., and down, R. with will in his hand.

Cunning. (R.) Now to put the widow up to our weak points? Eh! (*sees IRONSIDE with Mrs. SMYLLIE on his arm.*) What's the meaning of this?

Joseph. It means that plaintiff and defendant have agreed to a friendly compromise.

Cunning. Without consulting your legal adviser?

Joseph. On the contrary, I *have* consulted my legal adviser — here he comes!

Enter JOHN BRITTON and KATIE, L. D. and down, L.

John Britton, *vice* Cunningame, cashiered for a rogue. Oh, you rascally old snake in the grass!

Cunning. Snake in the grass! that's actionable. I'll have my action for libel.

John. We'll justify, plead it's true, and that it's for the public benefit the character of the reptile should be known.

Cunning. I'll upset the will!

Joseph. I'll upset you!

Cunning. I'll upset the will! Mr. Rollingsstone, put yourself in my hands — you have the law in your favor, sir.

Rodom. Then sound the war-whoop! (*imitates war-whoop.*) Let the strife begin!

Joseph. Pooh, pooh! You've brass enough, but where's your tin?

Cunning. (*aside.*) I'll even give up costs, so keen my hate is.

(*to ROLLINGSTONE.*) My dear sir, I'll conduct your action gratis!

John. That's unprofessional! Be on your guard;

Only good actions are their own reward.

Mrs. S. Take my advice. (*all seem surprised.*) You stare? Rely on't, few men

Can equal *us* in lawyer-like acumen.

Katie. I'm sure there's not a lawyer of the crew
Can plead, dear auntie, half as well as you.

Mrs. S. Reflect, your declaration ere you draw,
That we've possession — "Nine Points of the Law."
Only one point remains — (*to audience.*) that's your applause.
You give it? Good! Then we have won our cause.

CUNNING.	RODOM.	MRS. S.	JOSEPH.	KATIE.	JOHN.
E.				C.	

CURTAIN.



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A Farce, in One Act.

BY CHARLES SELBY.

BOSTON:
CHARLES H. SPENCER,

203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1867.

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
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A farce

IN ONE ACT.

BY

CHARLES SELBY, COMEDIAN.

BOSTON:
CHARLES H. SPENCER,
203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1870, Feb. 4.
Gift of
Mrs. H. Spencer,
of Boston.
THE PHANTOM BREAKFAST.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	ADELPHI THEATRE, LONDON, 1846.	BOSTON MUSEUM.
AUGUSTUS FITZMORTIMER, (<i>a most respectable Young Man — "out of business,"</i>)	Mr. Wright.	Mr. W. Warren.
MR. DEEPLY, (<i>An Eccentric Gentleman, "on the shady side of forty,"</i>)	Mr. P. Bedford.	Mr. R. F. McClannin.
MRS. DEEPLY, (<i>a beautiful and accomplished Lady, Wife of the Eccentric Gentleman,</i>)	Miss E. Harding.	Miss Annie Clark.
ROSE, (<i>a Parlor Maid with "an unexceptionable character from her last place,"</i>)	Mrs. F. Matthews.	Mrs. Fred. Williams.
SELINA JANE SIMS, (<i>"an Improver in a first-rate Millinery Establishment,"</i>)	Miss Woolgar.	Mrs. R. F. McClannin.

COSTUME.

Mr. Deeply. — Fashionable frock coat, fancy waistcoat, light trousers, patent polished boots, satin long end cravat, large white hat, full dress light wig.

Augustus. — Black dress coat and trousers, white waistcoat, white shirt front with frill, white cravat, colored shirt, black hat out of shape, pumps and silk stockings — the trousers turned up at the bottom to show white lining — eccentric black, or light wig.

Mrs. Deeply. — Pink silk morning dress, bonnet and shawl.

Rose. — Colored chintz dress and apron.

Selina. — White muslin, black silk shawl, small pink satin French bonnet.

SCENE — England. TIME — Present Day.

Time in representation — 45 minutes.

THE PHANTOM BREAKFAST.

SCENE. (*Which remains during the piece.*) *A Breakfast Parlor, handsomely furnished. Entrance from C. Projecting closet R. H. in F. A window in F. L. A table R. H. A practicable fireplace 2 E. R. H. A door 2 E. L. H.*

Enter Rose, C. with breakfast things on a tray.

Rose. (*arranging breakfast.*) Now, Mr. Augustus Fitzmortimer, your breakfast is ready, and you may make your appearance as soon as you please. Oh, what a pleasant thing it is for a young woman in service, to have her "day out" at home, when her master and missus are both gone visiting, and she's got the whole house to herself. (*sitting down.*) Oh, Augustus — Augustus! dear Mortimerfitz — I mean, Fitzmortimer — I hope you got my letter, and will come and keep me company a bit — for it's so lonesome to be in a great house all by one's self. There's his breakfast all ready for him, the insinuating, faithless villain, and here he keeps me waiting. Perhaps because he's a gentleman clerk, and wears gloves and straps, he's too proud to take up with a person in service, though she loved him ever so dearly, and he has vowed to make her his better half. Oh, dear! what we poor young women have to go through before we get a husband is dreadful. I don't wonder at the number of old maids one meets everywhere. There's no dependence to be placed on the men — particularly the young ones. Lovers are just the reverse of chickens — the oldest are the most tender. (*bell rings.*) Ah! (*Looking out of window L. H.*) 'tis he! turn the handle, dear Gussy, — the door's on the latch. Oh, I'm so glad — he's still a real turtle!

Enter MR. AUGUSTUS FITZMORTIMER, C. in a ball dress. His shoes are covered with mud, his trousers are splashed, his hat is out of shape and his face extremely pale.

Aug. A chair, or I'm dead! (*sits.*) Ah, Rose — how do you do, my darling duck? (*looking at his clothes*) Duck — oh —

Rose. Why bless me, Gussy! what a state you are in. Have you tumbled into the river?

Aug. Oh, no — I've only been caught in a slight shower. (*squeezes water from the tails of his coat*) I'm dying with cold and fatigue. I've been on my feet all night. Pity the sorrows of a poor young man, and get me some breakfast.

Rose. In an instant, dear. The tea is made, and I've got *z* nice roast fowl at the fire.

Aug. Thank you dear — a thousand blessings fall upon you. Stuffed with sausages, eh?

Rose. Yes, yes — real Eppings. (*sighs*) You haven't got a place yet, Gussy?

Aug. No, Rosy — I'm still a gentleman upon town. Waterloo is the only place I can call at present my own — and that I'm obliged to share with a regiment of distinguished foreigners.

Rose. Well, never mind — don't despair. Be like the old Roman heroes — *Bill chester tandem*, — at 'em again!

Exit, c.

Aug. (*Takes off coat*) I will, my love, — I will! Never say die! Wet to the skin! Reform your tailor's bills — superior Saxony — waterproof — *waterproof!* (*Wrings water from coat*) Oh, age of humbug! Here's a fire and a brush. (*Takes brush from table — puts coat on the back of chair before the fireplace, and during his speech brushes and wipes it with a pocket handkerchief*) Well, here I am at Kensington — ha, ha, ha! — but by what a strange string of adventures. Poor little Rose! She thinks I came here solely by her invitation. Oh, I'm a shameful rascal! If she knew that I went to a ball last night at the Castle at Richmond, in the hope of meeting a little Regent Street milliner, with whom I'm over head and ears in love — and that being disappointed of seeing her, I danced all night with another lady — an angel between four and five and twenty — a magnificent creature, after the model of the Venus de What d'ye call 'em — in white muslin, satin slippers, and long raven ringlets. Oh, there ought to be an act of parliament to prevent such dangerous things from walking about. Poor Rose! what would you say to your dear Gussy, if you knew that after the ball was over he offered his arm to the magnificent creature of the white muslin, satin slippers, and raven ringlets, to conduct her to her carriage — and fluding that fashionable inconvenience, by some strange accident, absent without leave, he proposed to escort her home on foot — that she accepted — (with the permission of her aunt and uncle, who played propriety all the evening, and made a second couple in the promenade) — that he availed himself of the propitious darkness, and whispered volumes of tender sentiments. It was all very well while the weather was fair, but that shower — or rather, deluge — which commenced at the long wall of Kew Gardens, and continued without the slightest intermission in the true cat and dog style — to the lady's door, at Honey-suckle Villa, Hammersmith, was rather too much for pumps and silk stockings. I confess it considerably damped my ardor — in fact, I am convinced that wet weather is a decided check to love-making. Who can be in a flame when he is wet to the back bone? It has always been a matter of surprise to me —

considering their great disadvantages in this particular — that fish should be so plentiful. Confound the little coquette! if I had known she had lived so far, I would not have been so gallant — particularly if I had supposed that her cross old brute of an uncle, on our arrival at the villa, instead of asking me to walk in to dry myself and take a glass of something warm, would have coldly thanked me for my civility, and slammed the door in my face, leaving me exposed to the merciless deluge, without even a gateway to shelter me. Then again, to increase my misfortunes, I must needs sit down on a milestone — to rest my wearied limbs and collect my scattered thoughts — the rain had worn it concave, and my dress kerseymeres imbibed several pints of fluid. At this climax of misery, I recollected Rose's letter, dated the twelfth of September, eighteen thousand and forty-two — (a good date for a little bill) — inviting me to pass the day here. I plucked up courage, pushed on to Kensington, and here I am — wet through and through — my best clothes ruined for ever, with no other remembrance of my adventure, than the prospect of a violent cold, and this handkerchief, which the magnificent creature in white muslin, satin slippers, and raven ringlets lent me, to prevent the wind from blowing away my hat. I'd give something to know the ungrateful angel's name. (*looking at corner of handkerchief*) Here's an A. and a D. Let me see — Ann Dixon — no — Anastasia Dobbs — no — Anno Domini — no —

Enter ROSE with a fowl on a waiter.

Rose. Here's the fowl, Gussy — beautifully done — just as you like it. Sit down, and make yourself comfortable.

Aug. Comfortable? ah, well — never mind. I haven't lost my appetite. (*Sits at table — places a napkin in his button hole and is about to cut up the fowl — a loud ring without at the gate*)

Rose. (*starting*) Somebody's ringing our gate bell. (*runs to window*)

Aug. I'm exceedingly sorry to say that I have the same impression.

Rose. Oh heavens! it's missus, come home in a fly. Oh, Gussy, dear, we're cotched!

Aug. Remarkably unpleasant. I again reciprocate your impression.

Rose. (*shaking him*) Get up — get up, and hide yourself somewhere, or I'm a lost young woman.

Aug. Don't mention it — I've lost my breakfast! where shall I go — up the chimney?

Rose. No, no — here. In this closet — there — there — (*pushes him towards door L. and runs off c.*) Oh my! here's a pretty-kettle of fish!

Aug. (*putting the napkin in his pocket*) Hide myself before I have had my breakfast? Oh destiny, destiny, will you never

cease persecuting me. (*looking at the fowl*) Tantalus was a happy man—he never knew the flavor of a roast fowl and sausages—oh——

Exit into room L. U. E.

Enter MRS. DEEPLY and ROSE, C.

Mrs. D. Why did you keep me at the door so long, Rose?

Rose. Because—because, ma'am, when I'm alone in the house, I'm very timbersome, and I bolt and lock all the doors, and—I'm so afraid of men coming on false pretences, please ma'am.

Mrs. D. What! have you prepared breakfast?

Rose. Y-c-s, ma'am.

Mrs. D. By whose order?

Rose. (*embarrassed*) By—by—nobody's, ma'am. I—I—thought you or master might return home by accident, this morning, so—I—I got it ready, ma'am.

Mrs. D. Bring me my chocolate.

Rose. Yes, ma'am. (*aside*) Oh heavens! my poor Gussy—what will become of him? he'll be suffocated. You shall have the chocolate directly, ma'am. (*going—aside*) Masters and missises ought to be ashamed of themselves, to come home in this surreptitious manner before their time, to turn their poor servants topsy turvy. (*looking at closet*) Poor Gussy: I'm sure he'll be suffocated, and I shall have to get another young man to keep me company.

Exit C. crying.

Mrs. D. (*taking off her bonnet and shawl*) If I escape a consumption after my walk in the rain last night, I shall consider myself remarkably fortunate—(*goes up and places bonnet, shawl, and parasol on table*) If my husband were to find out that I went to the ball, he would never forgive me.

Aug. (*opening door*) All's quiet! I'll be off! (*sees Mrs. D.*)

Mrs. D. (*startling*) Ah!

Aug. My partner at the ball—the magnificent creature of the white muslin, satin slippers, and raven ringlets.

Mrs. D. You here, sir?

Aug. Yes, madam.

Mrs. D. (*agitated and alarmed*) By what means, or by what pretence——

Aug. Really, madam, I—(*aside*) I musn't compromise Rose. (*smiling, sighing, and looking at her sentimentally*) Can you ask? (*sighing*) Oh!

Mrs. D. (*alarmed*) Sir,—I—(*aside*) To what peril has my folly exposed me. If my husband should meet this mad-man——

Aug. (*aside*) Nothing like brass. (*aloud*) Oh angelic being—too lovely stranger—when a man has danced with you for three hours, and has braved the wind and rain with you, in pumps and silk stockings, for three more, think you he can

forget you? (*wringing water from his pocket handkerchief*)
Never, — never —

Mrs. D. Oh, sir, you alarm me.

Aug. Fear nothing, madam — I am a most respectable young man.

Mrs. D. But sir, this intrusion —

Aug. (*aside*) I must go it again. (*aloud*) Pardon the overwhelming passion which prompted me to forget propriety. The fire, which the rain did its utmost to extinguish, now bursts forth again with redoubled energy — and my whole being is a prey to the devouring element. Vesuvius is a fool to me — *Ætna* a mere lucifer.

Mrs. D. (*aside*) He *must* be mad.

Aug. When your respectable — (but permit me to add, rather crusty) — old uncle shut the door in my face at your villa at Hammersmith, I made a vow, to follow you through the world, to be your second self — your shadow — your —

Mrs. D. Oh, sir — for Heaven's sake —

Aug. Don't be alarmed madam, I'm a most respectable young man — you are a widow — you told me so, you know, under the wall at Kew, when —

Mrs. D. I beg, sir, you will cease this ungentelemanly persecution. In a moment of difficulty I was weak enough to place confidence in a stranger, and I am paying dearly for my imprudence.

Aug. Don't say that, madam — if my affection is not reciprocated, I'll retire — but I shall carry with me one little remembrance of the happy hours — (bating the rain) — I passed in your society — one precious relic of a cruel but angelic being, in white muslin, satin slippers, and raven ringlets. Oh! — (*pulling handkerchief from his pocket and kissing it*)

Mrs. D. My handkerchief! Oh, return it, sir — I entreat — I insist!

Aug. Never! Ask me for an arm, a leg, my head, and I would throw it at your feet, but this dear object, marked with your cipher — (*kissing handkerchief, and pressing it on his heart*) — oh, it's twisted round my heart, and to tear it away would be suicide. (*with a sudden change of tone*) Don't have to answer for my death. I'm a most respectable young man — I am indeed — smile upon me, as you did at Richmond, when — (*Sees Rose, who enters c. with a cup of chocolate*)

Rose. (L.) Good heavens! (*aside*)

Aug. (*aside*) Rose! ahem — I'm in a scrape. Brass again! Well, madam — since you are so pressing, I will accept your kind offer.

Mrs. D. (C.) Sir. (*astonished*)

Aug. I confess I am very hungry, and the breakfast is so tempting, that I will waive all ceremony, and attack it at once.

Rose. (*aside*) He knows missis!

Mrs. D. (*embarrassed — aside*) But, sir—his impudence overpowers me—really, sir, I hope—

Aug. No apologies I beg, madam—I am particularly partial to roast fowl—I want nothing else.

Rose. I'm galvanized! (*to Mrs. D.*) Missis, I didn't know that you invited my—Mister—that gentleman to breakfast.

Mrs. D. No, Rose—that is—yes. (*aside*) What will become of me?

Rose. How did he get here, ma'am—I didn't let him in.

Mrs. D. I know it, Rose—I know it.

Rose. (*more astonished*) Well, this is more wonderful than the Arabian Nights!

Aug. (*taking cup of chocolate and placing his hat and cane on waiter*) Here, young woman, put these down, and then go and attend to your work. I have something particular to say to your mistress, and I do not wish to be annoyed by inquisitive servants.

Rose. (*more astonished*) Eh—what? I'm not quite sure whether I'm standing on my head or my heels—he's gone mad.

Aug. (*aside*) Take no notice—I'm trying to turn away suspicion. (*aloud*) Well, young woman, what are you staring at? why don't you go?

Rose. Yes, sir. (*laughing, aside — going c.*) Well, of all the impudent and clever chaps, Gussy bangs the law gentlemen, who live on soup and bully. *Exit c.*

Mrs. D. Well, sir, I hope you are satisfied.

Aug. (*looking at the fowl*) Not quite—but I hope soon to be. Have I your permission?

Mrs. D. Oh, certainly, sir.—(*pointedly*) You are the master here—do as you please.

Aug. You are very kind—will not you? (*Mrs. D. refuses to sit down*) Oh very well—stand upon no ceremony, make yourself at home, I beg. (*putting another napkin in his button*) After breakfast we will continue our tête-à-tête.

Mrs. D. What, sir—do you intend to remain here?

Aug. (*preparing to cut the fowl*) Most undoubtedly. You are a widow, and I am a most respectable young man—we are both free, and—

Mrs. D. No, sir—I—I am not free—nor am I a widow.

Aug. (*starting up from his seat*) Eh! (*aside*) Oh, I see—she has a guardian—a Cromwell—ahem!

Mrs. D. And I have urgent reasons that you should immediately leave this house, and forget that we have ever met.

Aug. (*looking at the fowl*) Cruel, cruel—fowl—fair—do not force me to tear myself away—(*looking at fowl*)—from—we'll talk about it after breakfast. (*adjusts his napkin and prepares to cut the fowl.* MR. DEEPLY heard without)

Mrs. D. (*starting alarmed — aside*) My husband!

Aug. A male voice!

Mrs. D. (seizing his arm, and speaking in great alarm) 'Tis he!

Aug. (starting up with the fowl on a fork) Cromwell — come to dissolve the parliament.

Mrs. D. Oh fly, fly — or there will be murder —

Aug. (throwing fowl on dish) Not if I know it. Where shall I go? what shall I do? I can't fly out of the window — I want wings. (looking at fowl and sighing) Wings — oh!

Mrs. D. (opening closet R. F.) Here, here — conceal yourself in this closet.

Aug. I shall be smothered! Never mind — anything for a quiet life. (puts napkin in his pocket and goes into closet, then looks out and speaks to Mrs. D.) There's room for another.

Mrs. D. Oh, for mercy's sake be still.

Aug. Might I trouble you for the fowl?

Mrs. D. (pushing him in) Oh, keep quiet or I am lost — here comes my husband. I must retire, or my agitation will betray me.

Exit into room 2 E. L.

MR. DEEPLY looks in C. D. His head only is seen between the two doors.

Mr. D. The coast is clear — ha, ha, ha! (laughing ridiculously) Now for my adventure — (he enters, and is turning round to fasten door, when AUGUSTUS puts his head out from closet.

Mrs. D. appears L. H. D. and throws a book at AUGUSTUS)

Mr. D. (turning hastily) Eh? what's that? (sees book on the floor) Oh — a book, blown down from the table (taking it up) Now I've told Mrs. D. over and over again, always to keep them in the closet — (tries to open closet — AUGUSTUS forces up top and knocks down a plaster bust, which falls on Mr. D's head)

Aug. (peeping out) Oh, my fingers! That was a narrow escape. (*Mrs. D.* appears and throws a parasol at AUGUSTUS, who knocks MR. DEEPLY's hat over his eyes)

Mr. D. Hollo — hollo! how high the wind is. That careless Rose has left the kitchen door open — thorough draught. I'll never give her a holiday again. Never mind — it's all right — I've got the house to myself — (dances and rubs his hands) Ha, ha, ha! — the dear creature will soon be here, and — (dances, &c.) How we married fellows eclipse the single ones in address in love affairs — ha, ha, ha — I'm an artful old rascal — ha, ha, ha! Think of my writing to my wife's milliner to come down here and take her instructions for a new bonnet — ha, ha, ha! — a bachelor would never have dreamt of such a capital ruse — ha, ha, ha! all snug and cosey. *Mrs. D.* on a visit to her uncle at Hammersmith — servant out for a holiday — and here I am, as gay and as frisky as young Love among the roses. (*sees breakfast*) Eh — dear me — I'll be hanged if there isn't a breakfast ready! Very attentive girl, Rose — you shall

have a holiday again. A roast fowl, too — very good indeed. She knows I'm fond of poultry. I think I can manage to pick a bit of the breast. (*takes up knife and fork, and is about to cut fowl, when AUGUSTUS, who has watched throughout the scene, comes out of closet, and hits him with a parasol*)

Mr. D. Eh? hollo — hollo! Confound the wind — its particularly disagreeable. I'll have that kitchen door nailed up. (*he is about to cut the fowl, when a ring is heard at gate bell*) Ha — 'tis she — my adorable little milliner! (*runs up to window*) Yes — (*dancing, &c.*) — all right, all right! (*in a soft voice*) Turn the handle, my dear — the door is open.

Aug. Oh, you old hippopotamus! I wish I could get at the fowl.

Mr. D. (*listening*) It's all right — it's all right — (*dances, &c.*) I hear her dear little feet coming pit-a-pat up stairs. (*opening door*) Come in my dear — come in.

Enter SELINA JANE SIMS, C. D., with a Milliner's band-box.

Sel. (*courtesying to Mr. D. who bows ridiculously*) I want Mrs. Deeperly, if you please, sir.

Mr. D. Yes, my love. (*aside*) Artful old rascal — ha, ha, ha! Sit down a minute or two — (*gives chair*) — I expect her home directly. (*aside*) Ha, ha, ha — safe at Hammersmith — ha, ha!

Sel. Oh, dear, I'm so sorry she's not at home, for I'm obliged to go back by the next bus. We is so busy just now, and Madam Le Tomkins don't like her young ladies to be out alone with the band-box. She says it's *uncummy fo*, and *bien dangereux*.

Aug. (*opening closet, and looking out. Sees SELINA*) Eh! why it's my little milliner I went to meet at Richmond. Oh, Selina Jane Sims!

Sel. Are you Mrs. Deeperly's father, sir? (*AUGUSTUS laughs in closet. Mr. D. looks round*)

Mr. D. Eh? Not exactly.

Sel. Her uncle, then?

Mr. D. Not exactly.

Sel. Oh, I see — you're the butler. (*AUGUSTUS laughs — Mr. D. looks round*)

Mr. D. (*with dignity*) Butler, be — ahem! No, my dear — not exactly. I am her cousin.

Sel. (*laughing*) Get along with you — you are too old for a cousin. They are always nice young men with mustarchers — your old and portable.

Mr. D. Ahem! (*aside*) That's rather a stunner — never mind — it's all right. I'll try a little blarney. (*aloud*) How delighted I am that my wi — ahem! that Mrs. Deeperly is not at home.

Sel. Why, I'm very much vexed.

Mr. D. Because it has afforded me the pleasure of making your acquaintance. (*looks at her grotesquely, sighs, places his*

Hand on his heart, and bows extravagantly) it's all right — it's all right — (*dances, rubs his hands and laughs*) *tol de rol lol!*

Sel. (*laughing*) Oh my — what a funny old fogie! What a capital one he would be to grin through a horse collar — ha, ha, ha! — he's the very image of the monkey at the Surrey Zewliocogical.

Aug. (*appearing at top of closet — aside*) Can she have come here to meet this old hyena?

Mr. D. (*bowing and grimacing*) Don't you recollect me, my angel?

Sel. How should I? I never saw you before in all my life. Stay — let's have a good look at you. Oh, yes — at our shop in Regent Street — peeping over the window curtains.

Mr. D. (*rubbing his hands*) Yes — (*aside*) It's all right — it's all right — *tol de rol lol!*

Sel. (*laughing*) Oh, Crimmini, was it you? (*laughing*) Oh, we've had such fun about you. Do you recollect when Madame Le Tomkins came out and ordered you to go about your business? Ha, ha, ha! Oh, how sheepish you looked, and how you slinged away like a dog with a kettle tied to his tail — ha, ha, ha — do you know what our young ladies call you? ha, ha, ha!

Mr. D. No — no. (*aside*) Damme, this is rather unpleasant — I — I don't want want to know.

Sel. Oh yes, you must — for it's so funny. Your "Mr. Skerpifins, the goggling gentleman."

Mr. D. Yes, yes — capital, capital — (*aside*) — pleasant, particularly pleasant — damned pleasant.

Aug. That's rather a digger for my friend in the straps.

Mr. D. (*aside*) Never mind, never mind — fire away again. You must be tired with your journey — allow me to offer you some refreshment.

Sel. No thank you. I breakfasted before I came out, and I must go now, if you please. Madame Le Tomkins will scold me for being away so long — particularly if she finds out I've been talking to a gentleman.

Mr. D. Why, is she so very severe on that point?

Sel. Awfully! she's as cantankerous about her young ladies as the Turkish Ambassador, and as inquisitive as Paul Pry. How she finds out, goodness knows. It was only last week she sent away poor Miss Jones for merely receiving a little innocent note from a young gentleman in the Guards, and she locked up Miss Smith for a whole fortnight, because she kissed her hand to her cousin as he rode past the window.

Mr. D. Indeed.

Sel. Yes, and she was going to send me home, because I wanted to go to a ball last night with a most respectable young man, who is going to marry me.

Mr. D. Shameful! you are very much to be pitied.

Sel. I am indeed, sir. Slave, slave — morning, noon, and night, and no comfort — no fun — no nothing.

Mr. D. Dreadful! It must be altered. A young lady of your accomplishments and good family —

Sel. Yes, sir — I'm very genteelly connected. My father's a captain in the navy.

Mr. D. Indeed! Post?

Sel. No — fore-top.

Mr. D. Ahem! You don't say so! You must alter your condition at once. You must take a shop, and go into business for yourself.

Sel. Get along with you. Where is the money to come from?

Mr. D. Oh, I'll arrange all that! I'll set you up.

Aug. (*peeping over top of closet*) And I'll knock you down, you old rhinoceros! (*the shelf on which he is standing gives way, and he falls out of the closet, with a crash of china. He crawls back again*)

Sel. La, goodness — you're not in earnest? Well, I never! This is generous. No fun now — all real earnest, eh?

Mr. D. Honor bright — safe as the Bank. (*aside, rubbing his hands*) It's all right — it's all right —

Sel. (*seizing both his hands*) Oh, you dear good old gentleman — I'll never forget your kindness. I'll love you as my father, my grandfather, my —

Mr. D. That's enough, don't go any farther — I'm perfectly satisfied with a place in your esteem. (*aside*) Pretty well for a beginning — now sit down and take some luncheon. (*takes two napkins from basket which is on a chair near C. D. and places them on table*) I'll go and get a bottle of champagne!

Aug. (*aside*) Champagne! Oh, you old rattlesnake!

Mr. D. Do you like champagne?

Sel. Don't I? It's prime stuff — I tasted it once. Such fun! One of our young ladies brought a bottle into the work-room, and it quite upset us. I put on one of Mr. Le Tomkins' Taglion coats, and pretended to be a gentleman. Oh, you never heard such a disturbance! Madame Le Tomkins came up and caught us in the middle of our games, and if I hadn't promised never to behave so *uncummy* fo again, she would have sent me away.

Mr. D. No fear of that now, as you are going to set up for yourself — sit down and make yourself comfortable. (*SELINA places her band-box on chair by table, L. and sits R. H.*) I'll be back in half a second. (*going — aside, rubbing his hands*) It's all right — it's all right — nothing like champagne. If she likes to have another masquerade frolic, I'll lend her one of my Taglionis. It's all right — it's all right. (*Exit C. rubbing his hands and dancing. AUGUSTUS throws his hat at him*)

Sel. Oh my goodness — what a piece of good luck! If Augustus knew of it —

Aug. (advances with a tragedy air) He does know it. (*sits on handbox and rises hastily*)

Sel. Ah! why where did you spring from? How de do — I'm glad to see you.

Aug. Miss Selina Jane Sims — I beg you will keep your distance. I'm a most respectable young man. I know your business here.

Sel. Well, there's no harm in it — I came to take orders about a bonnet.

Aug. (scornfully) A bonnet! (*taking her arms and shaking her*) Salina Jane Sims I'm ashamed of you.

Sel. Ashamed of what? I came to wait on a lady.

Aug. Wait on a lady! Bah! (*making furious tragedy grimaces*)

Sel. Why what is the matter? You're acting like Mr. What-e-callum, in Othello. You goggle your eyes, and twist your arms about like a windmill.

Aug. That old reptile — you came here to meet him.

Sel. Meet *him*? bless you, no. Mr. Reptile — if that's his name — is the cousin of the lady I came to wait on. — I met him here quite accidentally. He's a very kind and generous old gentleman, and is going to set me up in business.

Aug. Oh Selina Jane Sims — silly, misguided young woman — is it possible that you do not see through the villainy of this old sea-serpent?

Sel. Oh goodness gracious — you've lighted a lucifer. — I see it all — the artful old fox. How could I be such a fool! what shall we do to be revenged upon him? Let's break the looking-glass, tear the pictures, and throw the furniture out of the window.

Aug. No, no — we'll take a more salutary course — eat his breakfast. (*running up to table*)

Sel. A capital idea!

Aug. It has been floating in my head all the morning.

Sel. But when Mr. Reptile returns with the champagne —

Aug. We'll drink it. Sit down and be comfortable.

Sel. I will. (*sits at table L. H.*) Oh Gussy, what Madame Le Tomkins says is very true — it is *bien dangereux* for a young lady to go out with a handbox.

Aug. It is indeed. (*putting another napkin in his button hole and preparing to cut fowl*) At last I shall make sure of you, you tantalizing little animal. Will you take a leg, or a wing, or a bit of the breast?

Sel. Whichever you please — I'm not at all particular.

Aug. It seems very tender. (*he is about to cut the fowl when MRS. DEEPLY enters U. E. L., MR. DEEPLY C., with a bottle of champagne in one hand, a plate of fruit in the other, and a lobster under his arm. ROSE follows C. and stands in the doorway. MR. DEEPLY advances a few steps to the front—AUGUSTUS turns*

on his chair and looks at Mr. DEEPLY, Mrs. DEEPLY and ROSE. SELINA rises, and seems lost in astonishment. Tableau)

Mrs. D. (seeing SELINA) A woman!

Mr. D. A man! (sees Mrs. D.) My wife!

Rose. Gussy!

Aug. Bowled out again! This fowl is a will o' the wisp — I shall never lay hold of it.

Sel. Let us go, Gussy — here's all the royal family.

Rose. I'm mesmerized! Gussy breakfasting with a strange young woman —

Mrs. D. (aside) what can be the meaning of all this?

Mr. D. (advancing to AUGUSTUS — in a tone of authority) Who are you, sir? I don't know you —

Aug. You are perfectly right. The pleasure is mutual — I don't know you.

Mr. D. But who and what are you?

Aug. A most respectable young man. Don't you wish you could say the same — ahem! —

Mr. D. How did you come here, sir!

Aug. On foot, sir — through the rain and mud — from Richmond, by Kew Bridge and Hammersmith.

Mr. D. This is too much. Will you explain, sir, why I find you in my house in — in — this extraordinary position?

Aug. (rising) Certainly. Keep your temper, old boy, and I'll illuminate. In the first place —

Mr. D. Well sir, go on — in the first place —

Aug. (going to table) Permit me to take a little refreshment —

Mr. D. No sir! (taking him from table) I insist on an immediate explanation.

Aug. Very well. (looking at fowl) Adieu, fair vision — thou art lost to me forever! You want a full explanation?

Mr. D. Certainly — certainly.

Aug. Very well. In the first place — no, I beg pardon — in the second place, I — (whispers to him) — I know all about the bonnet shop.

Mr. D. (starting) Eh — ah — damme, I didn't bargain for that. I'm in a fix!

Aug. (pointing to SELINA) That young woman —

Mr. D. Stop, stop, sir — I'll hear your explanation in private. (AUGUSTUS goes up c.) Retire, my love — Rose — young person, go also. Ladies should not be present at these unpleasant scenes —

Mrs. D. (aside to AUGUSTUS) As you are a gentleman, be discreet —

Exit into room 2 E. L.

Aug. I will — I will!

Rose. Oh, you mock turtle — you shall pay for this!

Exit C.

Aug. No, no — you are deceived —

Sel. You know that girl, Gussy — take care of your eyes!

Exit C.

Aug. Dont be a fool — I will explain. (*sinks into chair near table*) I'm in a hopeful way here. I shall be torn to pieces by the women, horswhipped by old Cromwell, and done out of my breakfast. One last effort of expiring nature — (*he is about to cut the fowl when MR. DEEPLY seizes him by the collar, and drags him away*)

Mr. D. Now, sir, we are alone.

Aug. I have very substantial reasons to be sorry for it. What's the matter? Why is my domestic privacy disturbed in this indecorous manner? (*puts napkin in his pocket*)

Mr. D. Why, you — (*sees napkin and takes it from him*) I beg your pardon — that belongs to me — (*puts it over his left arm*)

Aug. Does it? Possibly — an inadvertency. Now, sir, will you have the goodness to explain your extraordinary conduct?

Mr. D. My conduct? Well, that's cool! I beg to say, that —

Aug. Enough — enough — I know *all* you would say — (*pointing to door*) — leave the house — quit the building!

Mr. D. (*aside*) Turn me out of my own house! (*he goes up to him*) Are you aware, sir, that I am —

Aug. Perfectly, old Cromwell — (*taking another napkin from his pocket and using it as a handkerchief.* You are "Skerpifins, the goggling gentleman."

Mr. D. (*seizing napkin*) Another! I beg your pardon — when you have quite done with that — (*takes it from him, and puts it over left arm.*

Aug. Eh? Oh, is it yours? Another inadvertency. Now, once for all, old fellow — you have made yourself very disagreeable here, and I would advise you to imitate the well-bred dog, and walk down stairs, or I shall be under the unpleasant necessity of throwing you out of the window.

Mr. D. Well, of all the impudent scoundrels — (*in a great rage*) Look you, sir — I am not accustomed to — to — to —

Aug. No more am I, sir. (*taking out another napkin and using it as before*) Your conduct is most atrocious — most —

Mr. D. (*seeing napkin*) Another! damme he has emptied the linen chest. I beg pardon, sir, that belongs to me. (*snatches up napkin and puts it over his arm*)

Aug. Eh? really — (*astonished*) — another inadvertency. (*feeling in his pocket*) I've no more, oblige me by making yourself scarce. (*pointing to door*)

Mr. D. Sir, I am too much irritated to dispute with you. I'll suppose you to be a gentleman — give me your card — (*gives card*)

Aug. Certainly — any thing you please for a quiet life. (*giving card*) — there —

Enter MRS. DEEPLY from room 2 E. L.

Mrs. D. Cards exchanged! how is this sir — (to AUGUSTUS) — would you provoke my husband to fight a duel?

Aug. Your husband? (astonished)

Mrs. D. Yes, sir — (with force) — my husband. Your intrusion here is most unwarrantable and ungentlemanly. There is the door — have the kindness to withdraw.

Aug. (aside) Whew! there's a spitfire. I've made a slight mistake. (bowing) Madam, I obey your commands. (taking *Mrs. D.*'s handkerchief from his pocket, shaking it out and wiping his eyes with it — she observes and is agitated — *Mr. D.* mistakes it for another napkin, and is about to snatch it from him)

Mr. D. Another!

Aug. No — honor — a mouchoir de poche. A gift from a lady. (kissing it) Oh, madam, your most devoted — (aside to *Mr. D.*) I shall expect to hear from you Mr. — Mr. — (looking at card — starts) DEEPLY! eh? (feels hastily in his pocket and takes out a letter — aside) Oh, murder! I've made an awful mistake now. This is the gentleman to whom I am recommended for a bookkeeper's place.

Mr. D. Good morning, sir — I shall not forget you. (pointing to door)

Aug. Sir, your most obedient. (aside) Desperate cases require desperate remedies. I won't go. (conceals himself in closet L. H.)

Mr. D. Whew! Good riddance — an impertinent scoundrel — I was never so insulted in my life.

Mrs. D. I trust, my love, you will not think of meeting him — he is unworthy your resentment.

Mr. D. You are right, my love — quite right — I'll deliver him over to the police. What's his rascally name? (looking at card) Augustus Fitzmortimer! Why surely — yes — (bursting into a loud laugh) Oh! of all the ridiculous mistakes — ha, ha, ha — he's, he's — ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. D. What — what?

Mr. D. The bookkeeper Simpkins recommended to me. He came here to deliver his letter of introduction, and I — ha, ha, ha! (aside) The milliner no doubt is his sweetheart — poor devil! ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. D. Did he come for you? I thought — (sees AUGUSTUS at closet door c.) Heavens! he is there still. (pointedly, looking at AUGUSTUS) You won't think of engaging him, I hope — so bold and impertinent a person will never suit you.

Aug. (aside) Oh, the revengeful puss — she'll ruin me, I'll hoist the flag of revolt. (makes a doll of his handkerchief and plays "Punch" with it over top of closet)

Mrs. D. (alarmed) Ha — my handkerchief!

Mr. D. Why, my dear, I'm told he's an excellent accountant, and a most respectable young man — but if you have a preju-

dice against him, of course he shall not be received. (*the handkerchief is shaken violently*)

Mrs. D. (*alarmed*) No, no—I have no particular dislike to the young man, I object to his boldness. (*the handkerchief is shaken again with more violence*) but (*aside*)—he has me in his power! I beg you will engage him. (*the handkerchief disappears*)

Mr. D. No, no—he has displeased you, and—and (*aside*) found me out with the milliner—so I have made up my mind to send him about his business. (*the handkerchief appears again, and is shaken with great violence*)

Mrs. D. (*aside*) He'll drive me distracted! Nay, I beg—I entreat—I insist that you engage him. (*aside to AUGUSTUS,*) Are you satisfied? (*the handkerchief disappears*)

Mr. D. Well, well—since you insist, I must submit. I'll write him a note, and settle with him at once.

Aug. (*comes from closet—puts his head under Mr. D.'s arm*) Thank you, sir—I'm eternally obliged.

Mr. D. Why, zounds—I thought you had left the house.

Aug. No, sir—there is a fascination—(*looks at fowl*) in this spot which binds me to it. I wished to deliver my letter of introduction from Mr. Simpkins—(*gives it*)—and to apologize—(*to Mrs. D. pointedly*) for my intrusion. (*looking at Mrs. D. tries to take her hand as Mr. D. opens the letter*) A thousand thanks!

Mr. D. Eh—eh—what!

Aug. A thousand thanks for your kindness. (*looking at Mrs. D. takes out handkerchief and kisses it*) Oh!

Mr. D. Yes, yes—all right—all right—don't mention it—(*shakes his hand*)—I'm happy to make your acquaintance. (*aside*) Snug about the milliner, eh?

Aug. (*imitating him*) Yes, yes—all right—all right. (*aside*) I'll take precious good care you never see her again!

Enter SELINA, C.

Sel. Come, Gussy, let us go—Madame Le Tomkins will think I've been run away with. (*courtesies to Mrs. D.*) Good-morning, mem.

Mrs. D. Who is this young person?

Sel. I am Miss Sims, if you please, mem, from Madame Le Tomkins—come to take your instructions for your bonnet.

Mr. D. (*aside*) I'm rather in a hobble! (*coughs, and tries to attract SELINA'S attention*)

Mrs. D. I never ordered you to come here.

Sel. Oh, yes, you did, mem—I saw the order on the slate. "Mrs. Deeply—Kensington—bonnet--send Miss Sims"—saw it with my own eyes.

Mr. D. (*aside*) Hush—hush—it's all right. (*to Mrs. D.*)

The fact is, my dear, I wished to give you an agreeable surprise, so I called and gave the order.

Aug. (*pulls crushed bonnet from box*) Yes — and here's the pattern!

Sel. Oh, goodness gracious, what will Madame Le Tomkin say! (*aside*) Oh, Mr. Reptile, I'm ashamed of you!

Mr. D. (*aside to AUGUSTUS*) Mr. Reptile!

Aug. (*aside*) Yes, yes — that's what they call you at the shop.

Mrs. D. But the breakfast —

Aug. I can explain that. Miss Sims is my intended — (*pointedly to Mrs. D.*) I came here with her — (*to Mr. D.*) — to take care of her, and Mr. Deeperly invited us to breakfast.

Sel. (*aside*) Deeperly! what, isn't his name Reptile? what crammers you tell, Gussy. Didn't we take French leave with the —

Aug. (*aside*) Hush, you little fool — I'm making it all right.

Enter ROSE, c., in a passion

Rose. (*aside*) I can't bear this ill treatment no longer! (*advancing to AUGUSTUS, R.*) I want to say something to you, sir.

Aug. (*aside*) Now I'm settled. Nothing but high pressure impudence can save me. (*to ROSE*) Permit me one moment. — (*taking Mr. D. aside and speaking mysteriously in a whisper*) She's going to blab about Miss Sims and the champagne — don't be alarmed, I'll bring you off. (*taking Mrs. D. aside in the same manner*) She wants to explain my true reason for coming here — don't be alarmed, I'll pacify her. (*taking SELINA aside*) That young woman is mad — she mistakes me for another blackguard — don't mind my whispering to her — I'm trying to make it all right. (*taking ROSE to the front*) There has been a row about the breakfast, and I'm trying to get you out of the scrape.

Rose. I don't like your familiarity with that young woman.

Aug. All for your good, to turn away suspicion. I'm pretending to be her brother.

Rose. You're not deceiving me?

Aug. Quite the reverse. I'm deceiving them. Second all I say and do — (*putting finger to his lips*) — Mum — not a word about the — (*to Mr. D.*) Lend me a sovereign. (*Mr. D. gives it — AUGUSTUS pretends to give it to ROSE, but puts it into his own pocket. To ROSE*) Now, young woman, did Miss Sims come here to meet Mr. DEEPLY? (*aside*) Look at your master and say, "Certainly not."

Rose. Eh oh! — (*Looking at Mr. D.*) Certainly not.

Mr. D. (*rubbing his hands and dancing*) It's all right — it's all right! (*goes up dancing*)

Aug. Then you know what brought me here? (*to Mrs. D.*)

Lend me a sovereign — (*she gives it — he puts it into his pocket, as before — aside to ROSE*) Look at your missis, and say, "Miss Sims, of course."

Rose. Miss — eh? Oh, very well. (*to Mrs. D.*) Miss Sims, of course. (*Mrs. D. goes up*)

Aug. (*beckons SELINA forward — aside*) Have you got sixpence?

Sel. No — only a fourpenny.

Aug. (*to ROSE. Gives her the fourpenny piece*) And you never saw me before. (*aside*) Stare me in the face, and say, "Never!"

Rose. Well, I suppose I must. (*stares at Aug.*) Oh, never never! (*aside*) What shall I be done to for this?

Aug. Now I believe you are all perfectly satisfied —

Mr. D., Mrs. D., Selina, and Rose. Oh, perfectly — perfectly.

Aug. Then let us go to breakfast — (*rushes up to table — MR. DEEPLY stops him*)

Mr. D. Stop! stop!

Aug. Another interruption! I shall never touch it. After breakfast — after breakfast. I've a stern duty to perform, and must not be taken from it. (*endeavors to cut fowl — MR. DEEPLY whispers to him.*) Eh? Oh, yes, — *looking at audience* — that must be attended to. (*he rises, and comes forward with fowl on a fork*) He wants me to ask you to breakfast — but one fowl among so many — eh? You'd want a leg and a wing — and, of course, that wouldn't do. Besides, after waiting so long, I'm peckish myself. I'm a most respectable young man, and have some credit in this house. Look in to-morrow, and I'll give you a *substantial* breakfast — at all events, you shall have a *merrythought*. Will you come? Look me full in the face, and say, "Of course!" You will? Thank you — I knew you would. Now — (*looking at fowl*) "On we goes to Dorking!" (*rushes up to table and eats voraciously — MR. DEEPLY, MRS. DEEPLY, ROSE, and SELINA endeavor to stop him.*) No, no — I will have it — I will have it! (*the curtain falls rapidly on Tableau*)

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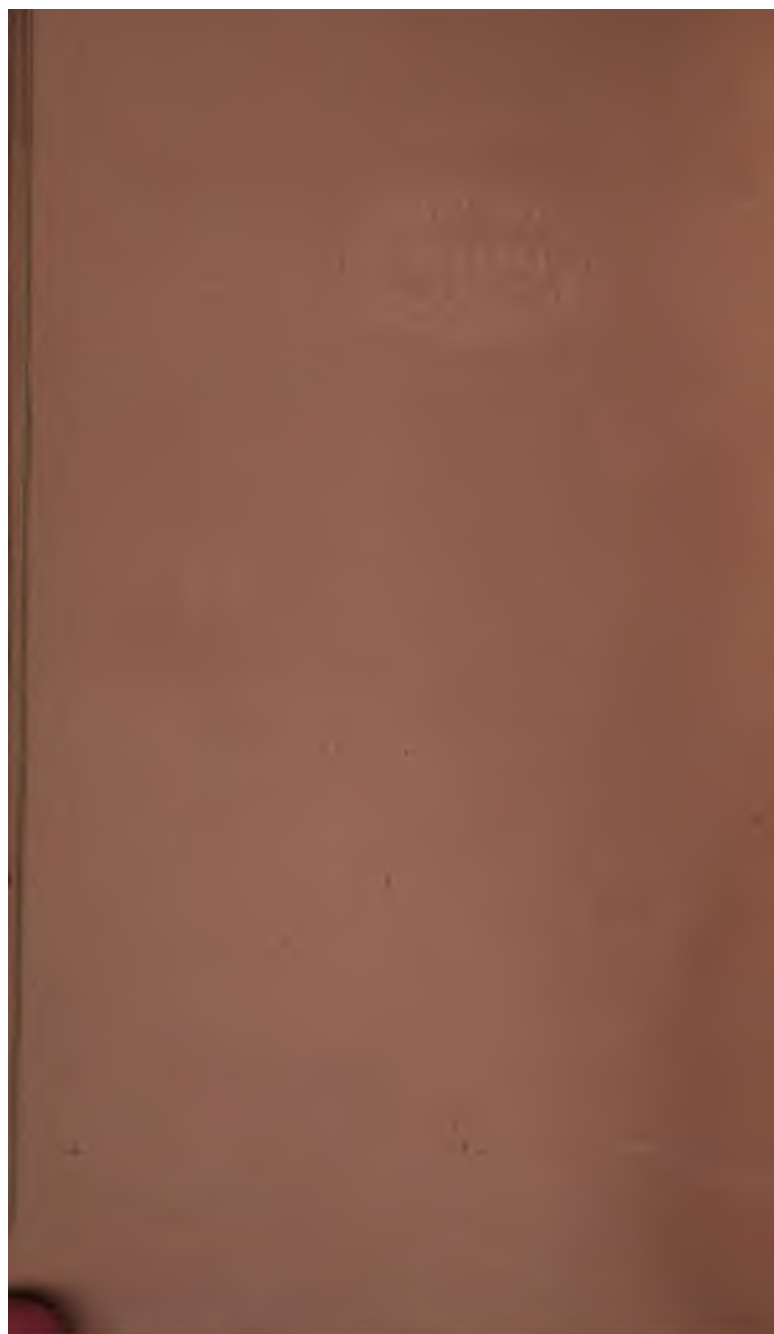
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DANDELION'S DODGES.

A Farce.

BY

THOMAS J. WILLIAMS, ESQ.

BOSTON:

CHARLES H. SPENCER,

203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1868.

DANDELION'S DODGES.

*1870, Feb. H. Life of
Wm. F. Spencer,
of Boston.*
CHARACTERS.

*New Holborn Theatre,
London, 1867.*

*Boston Museum,
1867.*

Mr. TURNPENNY DIBBS,
(a retired money-lender,
1st old man) . . .
VIVIAN THORNBRACE,
(a young squire, light
comedy)
DICKY DANDELION,
(a juvenile clodhopper, by
profession a "scarecrow,"
1st low comedy) . .
JEAMES,
"from town," a footman,
2d low comedy) . .

Mr. J. W. Ray.

Mr. R. F. McClannin.

Mr. H. J. Montague.

Mr. H. B. Hudson.

Mr. H. Widdcombe.

Mr. W. Warren.

Mr. Wilmott.

J. H. Ring.

MADGE MARJORAM,
(a village milkmaid). .
LAURA ARMYTAGE,
(a young widow) . . .

Miss Charlotte Saunders.

Miss Louisa Myers.

Miss E. Wilson.

Miss E. Wilson.

SCENE: A Picturesque Landscape.

TIME: Present Day.

COSTUMES.

DANDELION. — 1st dress: Short smock, corduroy knee-breeches, blue worsted stockings, large lace-up boots, wide-awake, etc. 2nd dress: Dibbs' coat, hat, etc.

THORNBRACE. — Plain shooting costume.

DIBBS. — 1st dress: Exaggerated "cockney" sporting costume. 2d dress: Blue coat with bright buttons, yellow waistcoat, white hat, brown trousers. 3d dress: Dandy's smock frock, etc.

JEAMES. — Showy footman's livery.

MADGE. — Picturesque country girl's dress. Blue cotton jacket, striped petticoat, shoes with buckles, straw hat, etc.

MRS. ARMYTAGE. — Elegant walking costume.

Time in performance, fifty minutes.

DANDELION'S DODGES.

SCENE. — *A Picturesque Landscape — at back a hedge, in the middle of which is a stile — L., an iron gate opening upon a park leading to Mrs. Armytage's residence, Ivy Hall — at back, R., second wing, a large tree — L. a rustic bench. DANDELION discovered seated on stile with a "clapper" (a rustic implement wherewith to frighten away the birds) in his hand. He is attired in a short smock, corduroy knee-breeches, blue worsted stockings, lace-up boots, wide-awake, etc. — His entire appearance indicates the very extreme of uncouth rusticity.*

Dand. (looking up in the air). Well, I think birdseses is the most aggrawokin' beastseses as is. Why can't they keep up in the air, as 'was nat'rally intended, instead o' hoppin' about on the ground where they aint got never no business? (*Gets off stile and claps clapper.*) Halloo! there be a flight o' crows a settlin' in Farmer Giles' cornfield. (*Shouting lustily and waving his arms.*) Hi! hi!

Enter MADGE over stile at back — she carries milk-pails, etc.

Madge. Why, Master Dandy, what be 'ee making all this noise about?

Dand. I be frightening away the crows like; it be hottish work for sixpence a day, but (*sentimentally*) the sight o' you, Madge, be as refreshin' as a moog o' cider at noon-day, or a shower o' rain in the dog-days. (*Sighing boisterously.*) O-o-o-oh!

Madge (laughing). Ha! ha! why, Dandy, you be all spooney loik this morning. What be the matter wi' 'ee?

Dand. Spooney, Madge? (*Approaching her.*) If you only know'd how mortal fond I be of yer. (*Looking off.*) Halloo! there be they birdseses again — they be all among the spring ingons now. (*Rushes to side R. and claps clapper—shouting.*) Hi! hi! (*Coming back.*) But as I was a sayin' when I was interrupted by they critturs o' crows, if you've no objection, Madge (*spoonily*), I should loik to keep company along o' you.

Madge (contemptuously). Why, Dandy, you be daft. A scarecrow, as only gets his living by frightenin' away the

crows, has no right to keep company with any one. Why, in the village they *do* say, Dandy, you be about the stupidest lad in all these parts.

Dand. (deeply hurt). Noa, that ben't true, Madge, noa, it ben't true. Why, there be Gilles Littlebrains, there be Crazy Jack, he be stupider than I be a deal.

Madge. Anyhow, I won't never marry any lad till he's gotten five golden suv'rins of his own.

Dand. (aghast). Five golden suv'rins! why, there arn't so much money in the univarsal world!

Madge. Well, whoever expects to marry *me* must get it somehow, and so I tell 'ee. I say, Dandy (*looks off*), there be young Squire Thornbrake.

Dand. (looking off). Ah! he arn't got much; his father lost all his money in spekylations. (*Contemptuously.*) What's the use o' being a squire if you arn't got never no vortin?

Madge. Never mind — though the young squire ben't rich, he's a deal more thought of than that stuck-up, conceited old Lannoner, Master Turnpenny Dibbs.

Dand. Ah, Master *Trumperry* Dibbs, him as bought the propriety up yan!

Madge. Yes; he made a large fortin' up in town by lending his money.

Dand. (astounded). Made a vortin by lending his money! (*Stupidly.*) I shouldn't like to make *my* vortin that way! Howsumever (*admiringly*), he be the man for I — ecod, he be Dibbs by name, and Dibbs by natur'; you should just see his man servant (*illustrating grotesquely*); he be all over gold here, and gold there, with stripes up and stripes down, and stripes all round his hat, and all down his back, and all across, and all manner; and as to buttons, it makes a poor country lad wink to look at 'um, darn'd if it don't! (*With booby tenderness.*) I say, Madge, what 'ud you say, if you was to see I all over buttons, eh, Madge? You'd keep company wi' I then, wouldn't you, Madge? (*Grins.*) He, he, he! (*Attempts to put his arm round her waist.*)

Madge (disdainfully). Hands off, Mister Dandy, I tell 'ee I shouldn't care for 'ee if you were smothered in buttons. (*Taking up her pails.*) Well, I must be seeing arter my cows.

Dand. (with boobyish tenderness). What, leave Dandy for a pack o' dumb animals!

Madge (going). Ah, to be sure, they're a deal more use than you'll ever be, Mister Dandy. You know what I told 'ee about they five pounds. (*Aside, going.*) He's a good lad enough, but then he is so mortal stupid. (*Exit over stile.*)

Dand. (alone, soliloquizing). Five golden suv'rins! (*Looking after MADGE.*) She be well worth the money (*usefully*); but where be a poor scarecrow like I to get 'un? Halloa, there be them birdseses among the tunnups now. (*Shouting and clapping.*) Hi! hi! hi! (*Rushes off.*)

Enter THORNBRAKE and DIBBS, R. 2 E.; the former wears a plain sporting-jacket, etc., the latter is attired in a ridiculously exaggerated sporting costume of the most glaringly "cockneyfied" description. Each carries gun, pouch, etc.

Dibbs (grounding gun and striking a conceited attitude, looking round). Halloa! here we are in front of Ivy Hall again. I say, squire, this is the third time you have brought me this way.

Thorn. (somewhat confused). Chance, Mr. Dibbs, I assure you, mere chance.

Dibbs (knowingly). Can't gammon me, young man. I'll lay odds it's the turtle-dove and not the wild fowl attracts us, eh—you sly dog, you!

Thorn. (interrupting). Really, my dear sir—

Dibbs (continuing). The charming young widow who, I'm told, lives at the hall. (*Knowingly.*) Can't gammon me!

Thorn. (confused). I—I assure you, sir, I feel nothing for Mrs. Armitage, but a—a—the most—(*confused*)—profound respect.

Dibbs (disdainfully). Respect! ha, ha! respect is all very fine for a young man, who like yourself is not troubled with a superabundance of the needful! (*Slapping his breeches-pockets.*)

Thorn. (offended—impetuously). What, sir! do you dare taunt me with my recent loss of fortune?

Dibbs (continuing superciliously). Now with me (*slapping breeches-pocket as before*) the case is different. I'm a man of fortune, large fortune, very large fortune. I never trouble myself about respect. (*Striking a conceited attitude.*) I've only to glance at a woman, young or old, dark or fair, and she strikes her colors immediately.

Thorn. (aside, angrily). Conceited old coxcomb! (*Aloud*) And how do you account for this irresistible peculiarity?

Dibbs (pompously). My dear fellow, you young men imagine that nothing goes down with the fair sex but good looks and juvenility of appearance: quite a mistake: the only thing a woman really cares for is—the L. S. D.!

Thorn. (interrupting). The what, sir?

Dibbs (continuing). The L. S. D., sir. (*Slapping trousers-pocket.*) The chink, the rhino, the mopusses—and small blame to the dear creatures. Mopusses mean carriages, mopusses mean horses, mopusses mean fine dresses, cashmere shawls, diamond bracelets. In short, in a woman's eyes, a man isn't a man at all, unless (*aggravatingly rattling money in his breeches-pocket*), unless he has lots of the mopusses!

Thorn. (angrily). Pshaw, sir! this is an unwarrantable libel on the sex!

Dibbs. Come, now, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I have never even set eyes on the bewitching young widow who

is said to inhabit yonder hall; (*conceitedly*) but I dare say she has heard of my magnificent income. (*Rattles money.*)

Thorn. (*aside, angrily*). Confound his income, I say.

Dibbs (*continuing*). Now I'll lay you a cool hundred I'll prevail upon this young and lovely widow to grant me a secret assignation.

Thorn. (*angrily*). A secret assignation!

Dibbs (*continuing conceitedly*). A tête-à-tête—"you and I nobody by." (*Knowingly.*) You know the style of thing—this very evening!

Thorn. (*impetuously*). Pshaw! nonsense! stuff impossible!

Dibbs (*conceitedly—rattling money in his pocket*). To a man of my income, nothing is impossible! Come now, is it a bet?

Thorn. (*indignantly*). Of course, it is. I'd stake my last penny against so outrageous an improbability.

Dibbs. Done! (*Relapsing into the man of business*). Just book the bet, will you? (*Produces pocket-book, as also does THORN-BRAKE.*) If it isn't convenient to pay down, you shall do me a little bill at three months, interest included. (*Aside*) And if he doesn't meet it, I can always sell him up.

Thorn. (*entering bet in pocket-book—Aside*). Presumptuous old parvenu!

Dibbs. Now then to write the insidious little epistle. I always carry stationery. (*Producing sheet of note-paper which he places on back of pocket-book, writing with pencil.*) My signature will be quite enough. (*While they are both engaged in writing, re-enter DANDELION, R. 2 E.; he is paring an enormous turnip with a large clasp-knife.*)

Dand. (*not seeing DIBBS and THORN-BRAKE*). I—I be just havin' a snack like. Beacon be so darned dear just now, I be forced to live on roots loike. I had carrots o' Monday, parsnips o' Tuesday, and now I be havin' a tunnup by way of a change loike (*with his mouth full*);—it be what they call a vegetable diet!

Dibbs (*who has meanwhile finished note, folding it three-cornered ways*). There—there's the little epistle. Now, how am I to forward it? There's no time to lose,—stay. (*Perceiving DANDELION.*) Whom have we yonder? He looks stupid enough for anything. Hi! booby, come here!

Dand. (*eagerly coming forward, turnip in hand*). Booby! that be I! They always calls I booby! (*Stupidly.*) Want any birds frightened away, your honor?

Dibbs (*impatently*). Birds! no.

Thorn. (*jeeringly*). A pretty love-messenger, truly.

Dibbs (*with a business-like air, to DAND.*). Now then, you sir, what do you call yourself?

Dand. (*with boobyish stupidity*). I don't call myself nothink,—it be t'others as calls I. (*Imitating.*) "Hi!" says they, "Dandy! come along this way!" (*Grins stupidly.*) Ho! ho! ho!

Dibbs (to THORNBRAKE). Did you ever see such a savage? (To DANDELION.) Now listen.

Dand. (stupidly putting his hand to his ear). I be a listenin'!

Dibbs (to DANDELION). I want you to do me a service.

Dand. (astounded — starting violently). The likes o' I do your honor a service! I be a goin' to tumble down loike! (*Totally overcome by the sense of the honor conferred upon him, he lets fall turnip, and falls backwards into DIBBS's arms.*)

Dibbs (astounded and vainly endeavoring to get rid of DAND.). Now then, blockhead, stand up, will you?

Dand. (still supported by DIBBS, half blubbering). It be too much for the feelings o' a young country lad.

Dibbs (endeavoring to push him away — roaring). Stand up, will you?

Thorn. (dragging him away from DIBBS). Do you hear, idiot? (*Stumbles over turnip, which is at his feet.*) What the devil's this? (*Violently kicks away turnip.*)

Dand. (hastily starting up). Dang it! he be a kicking my tannup! That be my dinner. (*Hastily rushes after turnip, which he crams into pocket of smock-frock.*)

Dibbs (impatiently). Now then! (*howling*) do you want to earn a sovereign!

Dand. A suv'rin! (Utterly dumfounded.) A real live suv'rin! (*Is about to fall helplessly as before into DIBBS's arms, when DIBBS gives him a vigorous push, which sends him against THORNBRAKE.*)

Thorn. (angrily pushing him back again). Stand up, idiot.

Dand. (utterly bewildered). I've gotten the staggers; that ere tannup's got into my noddle.

Dibbs (holding him by the arm). You see this note. (*Facetiously.*) It's what they call a billet-doux.

Dand. (stupidly). A billey what?

Dibbs (holding note close up to DAND's eyes). Now, if you can only deliver this note *here* into the hand of the lady who lives over in that house *there* (*pointing*), this sovereign *here* (*producing sovereign from pocket, and holding it up*) shall be yours, to put in that pocket *there*!

Dand. (repeating). In this pocket *there*! (*Taking note in a state of terrific excitement.*) I'll do't—I knows the lady—I'll give un to her!

Dibbs (continuing, to DANDELION). And I say, if you'll bring me a favorable answer (*affectedly*), a genial response, you shall have another sovereign.

Dand. (starting, amazed). Another live suv'rin! two golden shiners! (*Is about to fall as before against DIBBS, but DIBBS pushes him away towards THORNBRAKE.*)

Thorn. (pushing him back again). Stand up, idiot!

Dand. (pushed first one side and then the other). I've gotten the staggers, I knows I has! Stop a bit. (*To DIBBS — puzzled.*) What be I to bring?

Dibbs (affectedly). A favorable answer — a genial response — a fond reply —

Dand. (terribly puzzled, aloud to DIBBS). What be I to put 'em in?

Dibbs. Why, in your pocket, to be sure.

Dand. (aside, doubtfully). All that in one pocket! and my tunnup be there already. (*Walks up, and stares at note with a "ruminant" expression.*)

Thorn. (to DIBBS). Now really, my dear sir, I think this ill-advised joke has gone far enough.

Dibbs (aside — chuckling). Ha! ha! He's afraid of his money. (*Aloud*) Young man I am determined to prove to you that Cupid stands no chance when Cash is in the field. (*Exultingly.*) Oh, what a splendid thing it is to be rich! (*Singing and dancing.*) Tol-de-rol-de-riddle-lol.

Thorn. (aside — angrily). The ridiculous old upstart! I can scarcely keep my hands off him.

Dibbs (to DANDELION). Remember, a genial response, a fond reply. (*To THORNBRAKE.*) Now then, squire, come along. I'm not going to leave you behind, you know — can't gammon me! (*Passes his arm through THORNBRAKE'S.*) Come along!

Thorn. (aside — angrily as they go out). If he was only a few years younger, I'd pitch him into the first ditch we came to!

Dibbs (dragging him off). Come along — come along.

[*Exeunt R. 1 E.*]

Dand. (alone ruminating with a puzzled expression). I be to get two golden shiners if I gives this here little Billy what's his name, to the lady as lives yan (*pointing off*) — that be zar-tin — so here goes. (*Moving towards park gates.*) Why, dash my buttons, here she be. (*Nervously.*) Ecod, I ben't used to talk to quality folks — I be all o' a frustration like. (*Takes off his wide-awake, and unseen at first by MRS. ARMYTAGE, commences an incessant series of awkward bows, pulling vigorously at front lock of his hair, etc.*)

Enter MRS. ARMYTAGE from park gate, L. — she is attired in elegant morning costume, hat, etc. — she is followed by JAMES, the footman (flash livery — pompous manner.)

Mrs. A. (speaking as she enters). Stay, James; fetch me my parasol — I have left it in the summer-house.

Jeam. (obsequiously). Parasol, ma'am, which I will fetch it. (*Aside*) That impudent young chawbaking again — which he had better look out for himself. [*Exit L.*]

Mrs. A. (coming forward and looking off). Surely, I am not mistaken, Mr. Thornbrake again! (*Musingly.*) Now I wonder what brings that young man so often in this direction. (*Smiling complacently.*) I could almost imagine — but no, that is impossible, for no sooner does Mr. Thornbrake catch sight of

me, than he immediately beats a hasty retreat in an opposite direction. What a provoking, shy young man it is!

Dand. (who has meanwhile incessantly continued his rustic salutations). She won't take never no notice o' I. (*Awkwardly approaching and passing his hand over his face.*) Mornin', your ladyship's reverence.

Mrs. A. (*slightly starting*). Dear me! what an uncouth-looking object! (*To DAND. who is still bowing and scraping.*) You wish to speak to me, my lad.

Dand. (*fearfully shy*). Ees, your honor's ladyship. (*Grins idiotically.*) He! he! he! (*Holds out note.*)

Mrs. A. Oh, I see, a petition.

Dand. No, it ben't a 'tishun — it be a billy what's his name — as a gen'lman guv' I to guv' yer ladyship's reverence!

Mrs. A. A gentleman! (*Eagerly taking note.*) Oh, Mr. Thornbrake, I dare say.

Dand. (*contemptuously*). No, it wor sum 'un worth a dozen o' he! It wor Mr. Trumperry Dibbs!

Mrs. A. (*disappointed*). I have not the honor of the gentleman's acquaintance. What can he have to say to me? (*Opens note and reads.*)

Dand. (*puzzled and endeavoring to recollect*). He wants — he wants a — (*fearfully puzzled*) — darned if I knows what he wants; but there's a main deal on it.

Mrs. A. (*after reading note*). What unparalleled insolence — what unheard-of presumption! (*Throws away note, &c.*)

Dand. (*"scraping," and holding out his smock-frock like an apron to receive "answer"*). Please yer ladyship's reverence — what be I to take back?

Mrs. A. (*angrily*). Tell Mr. Dibbs that the vulgar impertinence of his epistle is in every respect worthy of the ungentlemanly parvenu who wrote it.

Dand. (*utterly bewildered — terribly puzzled — Aside*). These here great folks do jabber such gibberish — there ben't no sense in 'em!

Enter JAMES, from gate L., at commencement of last speech, with parasol.

Jeam. (*presenting parasol with supercilious obsequiousness*). Which it is the parasol, ma'am.

Mrs. A. (*taking parasol from JAMES*). I must prevent a repetition of this annoyance. (*Aloud*) James, you perceive yonder bumpkin, — take care that he never approach my door again.

Jeam. (*superciliously*). Which the hallusion is to the hobjek in the smock, which he shall be made a hexample on! (*Exit MRS. ARMYTAGE, R. 1 E.*) Which I will teach him to go dodging arter that 'ere young milkmaid as I honors with my hindwidual hadmiration!

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Dand. (*ling out smock*). This be'nt what I 'spected. (*Approaching MESS.*) I say, Muster Futman, you heerd what your miss... i? Be that what they call a—a — (*vainly endeavoring to remember what DIBBS has told him.*)

Jeam. (*conceitedly*). P'raps it was, Mr. Scarecrow, and on the hother 'and, p'raps it wasn't.

Dand. (*puzzled — vacantly*). Now that's just what I was thinking myself.

Jeam. Howsumever, Mr. Scarecrow, the next time I catch you prowling about these premises, you'll just have a taste o' this style o' thing. (*Lays his stick violently about DAND.'s shoulders.*)

Dand. (*roaring*). Oh! what be that for? Oh murder! — Oh! if he wasn't a per!

Jeam. So now, Mr. Scarecrow, you know what you've to expect, Mr. Scarecrow. (*At gate.*) Which it will teach you to mind your own business. [*Exit L.*]

Dand. (*blubbering piteously*). Oh, dear! oh, dear! Oh, if he hadn't run away like a coward, v a hidin' I'd ha' given him. (*Struck by a sudden idea.*) If only ha' thought on't I'd ha' chucked my tunnup at him. (*blubbering.*) Ho, ho, ho!

Re-enter MADGE, over stile at back.

Madge (*perceiving DAND.*). Dandy, you stupid lad, why what be the matter wi' 'ee now?

Dand. (*piteously*). That 'ere lubberly futman at the hall has been a murderin' I wi' a long stick.

Madge (*indignantly*). A long stick! I'll run and tell his misses, that I will. (*Makes for gate.*)

Dand. (*piteously*). Tell his misses! it was his misses as told he! All 'cos I gave her a little billy — what's-his-name. (*Blubbering.*) Ho! ho! ho!

Madge (*surprised*). A little billy what's-his-name!

Dand. Ees, there it lies, yan — all crumpled-up like.

Madge (*picking up note — reading slowly and with difficulty*). "Loveliest of widows, meet me at dark this evening — I've a deal to say to you. Your (*spelling*) d-i-s-tr-a-c-t-ed admirer, T-u-r-n-Trum-p-e-r-r-y Dibbs." (*Speaking.*) Well, I never! what himperance! What answer did she give?

Dand. (*piteously, rubbing his shoulders*). She didn't give I nothink — except that 'ere larruping. (*Blubbering.*) I loses two golden suv'rins as old Trumperry Dibbs promised I!

Madge (*amazed*). Two golden sovereigns! my stars, what a pity!

Dand. (*struck with a sudden idea, capering violently*). Oh!

Madge (*starting violently*). Lawks, Dandy, how you made me jump!

Dand. (*still more strongly stricken with the idea, violently*).

Aha! I knows a dodge! As old Trumperry will have a hanswer, 'spose you write him one.

Madge (*admiringly*). Now, well done, Dandy, that be something like a dodge, that be! (*Eagerly.*) I've got my milk-book and pencil in my pocket. (*Produces pencil and pocket-book, from which she tears a leaf—looking around.*) But what be I to write upon?

Dand. (*in great excitement*). Write upon? write upon I! I'll lay 'ee a back—I'll tell ye what to say. (*Stoops down.*)

Madge (*laying paper on DAND.'s back and beginning to write*). Now then, Dandy, go on.

Dand. (*dictating imperatively*). Dear zur!

Madge (*writing and spelling*). D-double-e-r deer—z-u-r sir.

Dand. (*importantly*). Got that?

Madge. All right. Go on—go on.

Dand. (*puzzled, after a pause*). Don't you think that's enough?

Madge. Enough? No, why you haven't said *anything yet*.

Dand. (*suddenly bobbing up*). Now, Madge, you're a female woman. What 'ud you say under the circumstances?

Madge (*reflecting*). Well, I should say I'd snap at the chance of a 'pointment with a faskinating old chap as has got such lots o' money.

Dand. (*greatly excited*). Brayvo! that be it,—fire away!

Madge (*flattered*). You leave it to me, I'll manage it for you. (*DAND. stoops down again, MADGE writes.*)

Dand. (*wriggling about*). I say, Madge, you be a ticklin' o' I!

Madge (*impatiently*). Keep still, Dandy. I'm just a thinking how many "k's" there be in "faskinating."

Dand. (*rising, sententiously*). Madge, he's a lib'ral sort o' chap, I'd tip him a couple; (*doubtfully*) he's a main good customer,—I don't know but what I'd make it half-a-dozen. (*Resumes his stooping position.*)

Madge (*writing*). Well, he shall have *three*, at any rate. (*Continues to write.*)

Dand. You must make a cocked hat on un, you know.

Madge (*folding note*). Three-cornered. I knows. There it is. (*Looking off.*) Halloa, here be old Dibbs a-comin'; I'll be off. (*Gives letter to DAND.*) Now, mind you don't give up the note till you've got the shiners.

Dand. (*grinning knowingly*). Ho! ho! I be wide awake.

Madge (*going*). Keep your weather-eye open, Dandy, for these Lunnuners are such *slippery* customers.

[*Exit over stile.*]

Dand. (*knowingly*). Let I alone. By gum, when I think that old chap's got my two shiners in his pocket, I feels a reglar bust o' *cleverishness a-creeping* all over me.

Enter DIBBS, R. 2 E.

Dibbs (looking around). Now where's my obtuse friend in the smock? (*Perceiving DAND.*) Oh, there he is. (*To DAND.*) Well, what's the news?

Dand. (grinning knowingly). He! he! he!

Dibbs. What's the idiot grinning at! (*Impatiently extending his hand.*) The answer — the answer!

Dand. (with mingled shyness and cunning). Beg pardon, your honor, it's so long since I zeed a real live golden shiner, dashed if I arn't quite forgot the looks on 'un. (*Extends his hand and significantly twiddles his fingers.*)

Dibbs. Aha, I perceive! Why, the blockhead is getting a little sharper already. Come, here's the sovereign I promised you.

Dand. (half bewildered, taking sovereign). A real live suv'rin in my own hand to keep. (*With a bound of delight.*) Ecod, I'll ha' o' bit o' beacon for zooper. (*Snaps fingers and dances about.*)

Dibbs (impetuous). Now then, booby, the note.

Dand. (slyly). Stop a bit, your honor's washup. This here shiner was for d'liverin' your honor's billy.

Dibbs. Well?

Dand. (with combined shyness and cunning, twiddling his fingers). I specks another for bringing the answer.

Dibbs. Aha! I perceive! (*Giving sovereign.*) This fellow's by no means such a fool as I imagined.

Dand. (taking sovereign). I've got t'other. (*Aside, wild with delight.*) I'll have a dumplin' with the beacon. Hooray! (*Snaps his fingers and dances about as before.*)

Dibbs (who has meanwhile been examining note). Singular paper this for a lady to write on. Short of stationery, perhaps. (*Reading.*) D-double-e-r dear, z-u-r sir, — queer orthography — country education, probably. Halloa, she says I'm fascinating with three k's. However, one thing's certain, she consents to the assignation. (*Singing and dancing.*) Tol-de-rol-de riddle-rol!

Dand. (aside, dancing and singing in imitation of DIBBS). Tol-de-rol-de riddle, etc. (*Aloud, approvingly.*) Then your honor's pretty nigh satisfied loike. (*Grinning.*) He! he! he!

Dibbs. Yes, and so ought you to be — (*conceitedly*) after my wondrous generosity.

Dand. (grinning). Well, your honor, in regards o' generosity, I've earned two shiners and your honor's paid the money, but if you comes to talk o' generosity, why — he! he! he! (*Grins, extends hand and twiddles his fingers.*)

Dibbs (amazed, aside). It's miraculous! The bumpkin is getting more and more sagacious every five minutes. Well, I may want him. (*Aloud.*) Come, there's another sovereign for you. (*Gives money.*)

Dand. (*taking money, bewildered.*) Three golden suv'rins! I'll go and get sum 'un to gie I a' touch up wi' a pitchfork, to see whether I be a dreamin'. (*Going.*)

Dibbs (*looking at note*). But neither time nor place is mentioned. (*Calling after DAND.*) Hi! you fellow, when and where am I to meet her?

Dand. (*stupidly*). How should I know?

Dibbs (*indignantly*). How should you know, booby? But you must find out.

Dand. (*hastily coming forward*). How be I to find out? (*Stily extends his hands and twiddles his fingers.*)

Dibbs (*rather alarmed*). Halloo! he's at it again. Arrange the appointment for this evening (*hastily*), and you shall have two sovereigns more!

Dand. (*frantic with delight*). Two suv'rins more. (*Aloud.*) I'll do't — I'll do't!

Dibbs (*surprised*). But how on earth will you manage it?

Dand. (*in a violent state of excitement*). I don't know how I'll manage it — but for another couple o' shiners I'd jump clean over the moon wi' both legs tied together.

Dibbs (*aside, admiringly*). This rude exterior evidently conceals a master mind. He'll manage it. I'll go and put on my most magnificent waistcoat, — I'll blaze out upon the beautiful widow like the glorious sun upon a field of buttercups. Ha! ha! I shall win my wager. (*Singing and dancing comically.*) Tol-de-rol de-riddle-lol, etc., etc.

[*Dances off L.*

Dand. (*singing and dancing in imitation of DIBBS*). Tol-de-rol de-riddle-lol, etc. He called I a fule jast now; he be a bigger fule than the scarecrow arter all.

Enter MADGE, over stile at back.

Madge (*eagerly*). Well, Dandy, how's things a-goin'?

Dand. (*joyfully*). Prime! (*Chinking sovereigns.*) I've gotten three golden shiners, and I be to have another couple.

Madge (*astounded*). Another couple!

Dand. If we can purwall on the missus (*pointing in direction of hall*) to meet old Trumperry this here werry identical evening.

Madge (*indignantly*). Nonsense, Dandy; a joke's a joke, but Mrs. Armytage wouldn't meet that old stupid for worlds. (*Struck by a sudden idea.*) Ah!

Dand. (*starting violently*). What's up?

Madge (*triumphantly*). I've got a dodge this time. (*Hastily.*) Follow old Turnpenny, give him Mrs. Armytage's best respects, and she'll meet him under the mulberry-tree in the park, this evening, between day and dark.

Dand. (*running backwards and forwards in a terrific bustle*). The mulberry-tree in the park. I'll tell him, I'll tell him!

Madge (with coquettish bashfulness). I say, Dandy (playing with her apron), two more shiners will make five!

Dand. (suddenly remembering). By gum, so they will! You'll make me Mrs. Madge, noa, I mean I'll make you Mrs. Dandy, — hooray! (*Snaps his fingers and dances about.*)

Madge. Hooray! (*Going.*) At dusk you know, Dandy.

Dand. (dancing). All right, Madge, at dusk.

Madge (reflecting). And stop — she'll give three smacks o' the hand (imitating), to let him know she's there.

Dand. (in great excitement). Three smacks o' the hand, — all right.

Madge (aside). The lady's maid 's a friend o' mine. What a game it will be! (*Coquettishly.*) Good-by, Dandy. (*Going.*)

Dand. Good-by, Madge.

Madge (stopping and looking at him significantly). Good-by, dear Dandy.

Dand. Good-by, dear Madge. (*Aside, sheepishly.*) I've half a mind to give her a buss loike. (*Advancing stealthily towards MADGE.*) I will, darned if I don't. (*Kisses her.*)

Madge (with feigned indignation). Oh, you owdacious young man! (*Aside, going.*) He isn't so very stupid after all.

[*Exit through park gates, L.*]

Dand. (joyously). Hooray! she'll keep company wi' Dandy now. I'll have a bit o' beacon, and a dumplin', and a pot o' yale for zooper, darned if I don't. I be reg'lar bustin' wi' jollification loike. (*Snaps his fingers and dances gleefully up stage.*)

Enter THORNBRAKE, R. 2 E.

Thorn. (soliloquizing impetuously). No! yes! yes! no! it can't be — but yet on the other hand it might — it *isn't* I'm well aware — but then only supposing it *was*.

Dand. (not seeing THORNBRAKE, taking out sovereigns and chinking them). They be pretty little things to look at; but they be plaguy difficult little things to get. I could chink the little dears about all night, darn'd if I couldn't.

Thorn. (perceiving DAND.). Aha! my rival's uncouth protégé, with gold in his hand!

Dand. (still not perceiving THORNBRAKE). I'll put these here shiners in my pocket (nervously), for night be a comin' on, and it 'ud be main 'ockard if I was to fall in wi' robbers. (Nervously.) I be darned frightened o' robbers, I be. (*At this moment THORNBRAKE, who has slowly approached him, seizes him by the hand. DAND., roaring in the extremity of terror.*) Murder! thieves!

Thorn. Rascal, where did you get all that money?

Dand. (recognizing THORNBRAKE, and slowly recovering from his terror). My wig, if I didn't take your honor for a reg'lar murdering cut-throat thief!

Thorn. (impetuously). Who gave you all that money?

Dand. (nervously endeavoring to conceal money, and rapidly transferring it several times from one pocket to the other). Old Trumperry, to be sure! (*Knowingly.*) It be all right. The 'pointment's a-coming off presently, under that 'ere mulberry-tree, inside the park.

Thorn. (despairingly). My worst anticipations realized.

Dand. (striking attitude, complacently). It be all *my* doings, and main clever I've managed it too. Howsumever, squire, I can't stop a talking to *you*, squire; I've got some partiklar business to see arter, squire. I wishes you a werry good evening, squire. [*Exit conceitedly, L. 1 E.*]

Thorn. (alone, angrily). This is pleasant. Is it possible that the mere mention of his wealth can have sufficed to procure that conceited old money-lender a proof of regard, which a year of ceaseless attention and respectful admiration has failed to obtain *me*? It's enough to make one forswear the sex, and take an oath of perpetual celibacy. Ah, she comes. (*Starting nervously.*)

Enter MRS. ARMYTAGE, R. 2 E.

Mrs. A. (not seeing THORNBRAKE). How very provoking! the rector's wife has been unexpectedly summoned to town. (*Perceiving THORNBRAKE — aside.*) Ah, Mr. Thornbrake!

Thorn. (aside). I vow she looks more beautiful than ever. (*Angrily.*) She's doing it on purpose. (*Bows coldly and is about to withdraw.*)

Mrs. A. (aside, annoyed). There, he's off again. What a very provoking young man! (*Aloud.*) Ahem! Mr. Thornbrake. Pray do not allow my arrival to disturb you.

Thorn. (with withering sarcasm). My presence might prove superfluous, not to say inconvenient — I beg, therefore, at once to take my leave.

Mrs. A. (surprised, aside). I shall lose my temper with this young man presently.

Thorn. (returning). Permit me to add that I never understood the real power of money, till I saw it exemplified in that conceited, contemptible old coxcomb, Mr. Turnpenny Dibbs.

Mrs. A. (aside, delighted). As I live, he's jealous. (*Aloud, with coquettish affectation of indifference.*) Is the gentleman in question so very rich, then?

Thorn. (with concentrated rage). He is, madam! Very rich, uncommonly rich — abominably rich. But see (*with withering sarcasm*), the all conquering Turnpenny draws nigh! (*Pointing off L.*)

Mrs. A. (scarcely able to restrain her laughter, aside). The absurd old coxcomb! (*Aloud.*) Mr. Thornbrake, when next we meet, I may possibly require an explanation of certain mysterious expressions with which you have favored me, but which,

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at present, I confess my entire inability to comprehend. (*Courtesies form at gate, aside.*) He's over head and ears in love with me, and no true woman.

[*Exit through gate, L.*]

Thorn. (*He, surprised*). How's this? She avoids the old coxcomb. calm, too, so self-possessed. Can I be mistaken, or is this indifference merely a ruse, a trick?

N and DIBBS arm-in-arm, L. 1 E., the latter a tall; glossy white hat, yellow satin waistcoat, blue buttons, light brown pants, etc.

Dibbs (*conceitedly flourishing handkerchief and singing as he enters*). Fol-de-dol-re-riddle-lol, etc. I think this will about settle the widow's business.

Dand. (*clumsily imitating DIBBS's jaunty manner*). We'll settle the widow's business! (*Perceiving THORNBRAKE.*) Hal-loa! why, there be squire.

Dibbs (*aggravatingly*). Aha, squire! got your money ready? the enemy has capitulated.

Dand. (*imitating DIBBS*). E'es, it be coming off, like.

Thorn. What! (*again relapsing into jealous fury.*) Can such duplicity be possible?

Dibbs (*conceitedly*). Possible, sir! it's more than possible, its (*singing and dancing aggravatingly*) Fol-de-rol-de-riddle-lol, isn't it, young chawbacon? (*To DAND.*)

Dand. (*imitating DIBBS conceitedly*). It be ri-too-ral-loo-ral-loo-ral, etc.

Dibbs. The women can't resist me, can they, my youthful agriculturist? (*Gives DAND. a poke in the ribs.*)

Dand. (*conceitedly*). Not a bit on't, my hellderly hold brick. (*Gives DIBBS a tremendous slap on the back.*)

Dibbs (*starting*). Halloa, I say! (*To THORNBRAKE.*) Squire, I really feel for you, 'pon my life I do; but (*insinuatingly*) might I ask you to clear the course, move off the ground?

Thorn. (*in a towering passion*). No, sir, I will not move off the ground, sir; this infernal assignation shall not take place.

Dibbs (*angrily*). What, sir! Do you forget your wager, sir?

Thorn. (*in a towering passion*). Hang my wager, sir! I tell you I shall insist on satisfaction were you as rich as Cræsus!

Dibbs (*aggravatingly*). Pooh, pooh, sir! There's no such thing as satisfaction in this country.

Dand. (*imitating*). There ben't no satisfaction in the country! (*Ru'fully, aside.*) I never had none!

Thorn. (*waxing more and more wrath, advancing upon DIBBS*). Why, damme, sir, I'll riddle you through and through, and make mincemeat of you afterwards!

Dibbs (retreating, alarmed). The devil you will! What a horrid ruffian!

Dand. (who has meanwhile stealthily approached DIBBS). I knows another *dodge* — say you gives up the 'pintment, I'll put you up to a little summat!

Dibbs (surprised). You will. (*Aside*) I'll take the hint. I've faith in this hob-nailed Machiavel. (*Looking at DAND., who is grinning at him with an air of mingled cunning and stupidity.*) Yes, there genius in every line of that intelligent countenance. (*Aloud, patronizingly.*) Well, squire, I have no wish to cause you any positive annoyance.

Thorn. (eagerly). You withdraw your pretensions?

Dibbs (evasively). I — I'll see what I can do for you!

Dand. (patronizingly). We'll see what we can do for 'ee.

Thorn. (rushing at him; DAND. bolts right away). Wretched clodhopper!

Dand. (alarmed, pulling DIBBS by the arm, aside). Come along, Mr. Trumperry. (*Takes DIBBS by the arm.*) By gum, I feels another bust o' cleverishness a-creepin' all over me. Come along, Trumperry, come along, I'll put yer up to summat.

[*Exeunt R. arm-in-arm, swaggering.*]

Thorn. (alone, looking after them suspiciously). This sudden renunciation, these signs of intelligence, — can this withdrawal be a mere feint? Hum! I'll watch, and that vigilantly. (*Looking off in the direction of the Hall.*) No sign of Mrs. Armytage; where can she be, I wonder? (*Crossing and looking off in the opposite direction.*) Dibbs and his hopeful protégé in the smock frock have both disappeared. (*Angrily.*) To think that I should be caused all this anxiety, merely because an old monkey of a money-lender happens to possess a few thousands more than myself. It's positively disgusting! (*Crosses stage and looks off.* Night has been gradually coming on from the commencement of this speech — lights gradually down.) Night is coming on. Hist! a footstep, — some one approaches. The hour for this incomprehensible assignation is at hand. I will conceal myself, and woe betide that elderly embodiment of sixty per cent. if he attempt to deceive me! (*Disappears at back, R. U. E.*)

Re-enter DIBBS cautiously, R. 1 E., disguised in DANDELION'S smock frock and wide-awake; his trowsers are tucked up so as to look like "smalls."

Dibbs (chuckling). Talk about *dodges*, — why this is a master-stroke, a positive prize *dodge*! I was so charmed with the bumpkin's ingenuity, that I gave him the other two sovereigns there and then. Yes, thanks to this exchange of garments, I can await my charmer's arrival without fear of annoyance from my frantic young rival. Halloo (*putting his hand into the*

pocket of smock, what the deuce is this? (*Pulling out turnip and knife.*) A monstrous turnip!

Enter THORNBRAKE, stealthily, R.

Thorn. (*e, suspiciously*). Hum! that bumpkin back again.

Dibbs (*alarmed*). My rival returned already? (*Begins turnip with clasp-knife.*)

Thorn. (*has been closely watching him*). I say, sirrah, what's been that superannuated old monkey, Dibbs?

Dibbs (*starting*). Superannuated old monkey!

Thorn. (*he*). Do you mean to answer?

to... it o' turnip in my mouth
st... a large piece of turnip, and
o... when his mouth full.) He be

off R.)

ly). Over...
Dibbs's grin.) He! he! he!

there he is, in the mid-
frightful yellow waistcoat
a bonfire through a fog.
little game!

[*Exit precipitately, R.*]

Dibbs (*alone, chuckling with intense gratification*). Ha! ha! very facetious! there he goes! (*Looking off.*) Dandy catches sight of him — away he starts, hard pushed by the squire — ha! ha! I've got rid of my rival, and no mistake! (*Three claps of hand heard inside the park gate.*) Ah, the signal, the charming widow is awaiting me. (*Approaching gate.*) I've brought a handsome bracelet with me, which I'll slip on her fair arm in token at once of my admiration and my triumph. (*Chuckling.*) What a gay young spark I am, to be sure! (*Exit through gate into park, dancing and humming conceitedly.*) Told-riddle, etc. (*No sooner has he disappeared than loud noise is heard off stage, R.*)

Enter DAND., R. U. E. running with all his might — he is attired in DIBBS's white hat, blue coat, yellow satin waistcoat, and his own "corduroy smalls." After running right round the stage, he falls breathless on bench.

Dand. (*gasping*). By gum! this be harder work nor fright-enen' away the crows! (*Getting up.*) That darn'd young squire be close on my heels; he's dodged I round this way. (*Looking off in fearful alarm.*) He'll find out I ben't old Trum-perry! Ah! here he comes — he'll murder I fast, and rob I o' my shiners arterwards. (*Throws himself on bank.*)

Enter THORNBRAKE, running with all his might, R. U. E.

Thorn. (stopping). Well, for a man of his years, he certainly is the swiftest runner I ever met with! (*Looking round.*) What can have become of him? (*Perceiving DAND., and believing him to be DIBBS.*) Why, there he is! (*Rushes at him.*) Now then, Mr. Dibbs, explain your motives for avoiding me in this unaccountable manner (*DAND. putting handkerchief to his face, and endeavoring to imitate DIBBS's manner.*)

Dand. (affectedly imitating DIBBS). Ya-as — ya-as — exactly.

Thorn. (surprised). What do you mean by "ya-as — ya-as?"

Dand. (awfully confused, but still endeavoring to imitate DIBBS). I mean it be — Fol-de-rol-de-riddle-lol!

Thorn. (surprised). Why, who the devil's this? (*Seizes DAND. by collar — DAND.'s hat falls off.*) Dandy!!!

Dand. (in terrific alarm). A — a — it be only one o' my little dodges!

Thorn. (furious). Little dodges! I see it all — a trick to draw me away. (*Shaking DAND. violently.*) Speak, scoundrel, where is that rascally old Dibbs?

Dand. (aside). It be all up! (*Struggling violently.*) He be havin' the 'pintment under the mulberry-tree?

Thorn. Under the mulberry-tree! (*Flinging DAND. angrily from him.*)

Dand. (half blubbering). He guv I another two shiners — I'd do any mortal thing for shiners. (*Piteously.*) It's my natur'!

Enter MRS. ARMYTAGE, from park I.

Mrs. A. (laughing and looking off in direction of park). An impudent trick, but as deserved a hoax as ever was played on a purse-proud cockcomb.

Thorn. (Perceiving Mrs. ARMYTAGE). Why, there she is. (*With withering sarcasm.*) How is it, madam, that you are not under the mulberry-tree!

Mrs. A. Under the mulberry-tree, sir?

Thorn. (bitterly). Ay, madam, the mulberry-tree! beneath whose branches (*turning up his sleeves*) I shall now straightaway proceed to exterminate (*roaring*) that antiquated Guy Fawkes, Mr. Turnpenny Dibbs! (*Rushes towards park gates.*)

Mrs. A. (screaming). A-a-a-h!

Dand. (rushing after THORNBRAKE and dragging him back.) Hi! stop! he's a-goin' to murder old Trumperry!

Dibbs (heard inside park roaring). Oh! oh! what are you about! (*DANDELION and THORNBRAKE stop short.*)

Jeam. (inside park). Which I told yer, if ever I caught you here again. (*Noise of stick.*) Take that, you scarecrow!

Dibbs. (inside park, roaring). Oh! oh! it's all a mistake. I'm not a scarecrow! Murder!

Dand. (listening surprised). Somebody be gettin' another larrupin'! (*Great noise inside park gates, which is suddenly*

DANDELION'S DODGES.

opened, and is violently ejected therefrom; he is in a very dilapidated condition, his hat is knocked over his eyes, smock-frock covered with mud, etc., etc.)

Dibbs (entering, roars out). Murder!!!

Thorn. (startled). Dibbs, in this disguise!

Dibbs (pointing to his shoulders). It's shameful — its infamous; I had just accidentally slipped the bracelet on my charmer's wrist, when an infernal dunkey falls upon me with a thick stick!

Dand. (bursting out into a hoarse laugh). Ho! ho! ho! that be darned funny! he took you for I — he told I if he cotched I again, he'd wop I! (Laughing uproariously.) Ho! ho! ho!

Dibbs (furiy). Leave off laughing, or I'll strangle you! (Turning round to Mrs. Armytage.) Halloo! a lovely female! (Looking at her over THORNBRAKE'S shoulder.) Why, what a beauty!

Thorn. (surprised). What do you know Mrs. Armytage?

Dibbs (astounded). Mrs. Armytage! (Approaching Mrs. Armytage.) This is the devil!

Mrs. A. (with difficulty restraining her laughter). Yes, sir, the lady to whom you address that little epistle, is the devil was under the yew-tree?

Enter MADGE, from park gate, flauntingly attired in a bright-red shawl, silk dress, hat with feather (she has a large gold bracelet on her wrist), followed by JEAMES and two other SERVANTS bearing lanterns — lights up.

Madge (coquettishly). Who? why Madge Marjoram, the milkmaid.

Dand. (bursting into a stentorian laugh). Ho, ho, ho!

Dibbs (aghast). A milk-maid! and I've given her a twenty-guinea bracelet! (Rushing at MADGE.) Return me my property instantly!

Dand. (hastily rushing between them). Don't you, Madge! Never return nothink!

Madge (to DIBBS). Nay, your honor gave it to me — I never asked you for it. (Imitating DIBBS affectedly.) "Accept," says he, "accept this trifling token of my ardent admiration." (Archly.) And I accept it accordingly.

Dand. (Admiringly.) And she accepted it according. (Suddenly bursts forth into renewed laughter.) This be the primest dodge of all! ho, ho, ho!

Mrs. A. Admirable, I declare. (Unable to restrain her laughter.) Ha, ha, ha!

Thorn. (Perceiving the real state of the case.) Ha, ha, ha, ha! (to MR. DIBBS.) An excellent jest — I'll trouble you for that hundred pounds.

Dibbs (grinning spitefully). Ha! ha! ha! (Suddenly stopping short, roaring.) I shall go mad with rage.

Jeam. (coming forward obsequiously). Which I perceives has been walluppin' a gent — Which I begs to hoffer my hapologies.

Dibbs (rushing at him furiously — roaring). Apologies be hanged! (*JEAMES, in extreme terror, beats a hasty retreat towards park gate; just as he reaches it, DIBBS, in a paroxysm of rage, takes turnip from pocket of smock, and shies it after JEAMES.*)

Jeam. (dreadfully alarmed.) Which it is a wegetable! (*Disappears through gate.*)

Dand. Dang it, that be my tunnup! (*Rushes after turnip picks it up, and shies it over wall after JEAMES.*)

Dibbs (to DAND.) And now, scoundrel, perhaps you'll take my clothes off.

Dand. Not if I know it. — (*Reproachfully.*) Look how you've been and damaged my nice white smock. (*Pointing to mould on smock.*) I tell 'ee what, we'll make a swop. I say, Madge, I'ze 'gotten the five shiners. (*Pointing to the yellow waistcoat, etc.*) This will do for the weddin', won't it, Madge?

Madge (joyfully). That it will, Dandy. (*Takes DAND's arm.*) I declare he isn't stupid a bit!

Dibbs (stamping). Bamboozled by a bumpkin! foiled at every point! (*Roaring.*) What's the use of all my money?

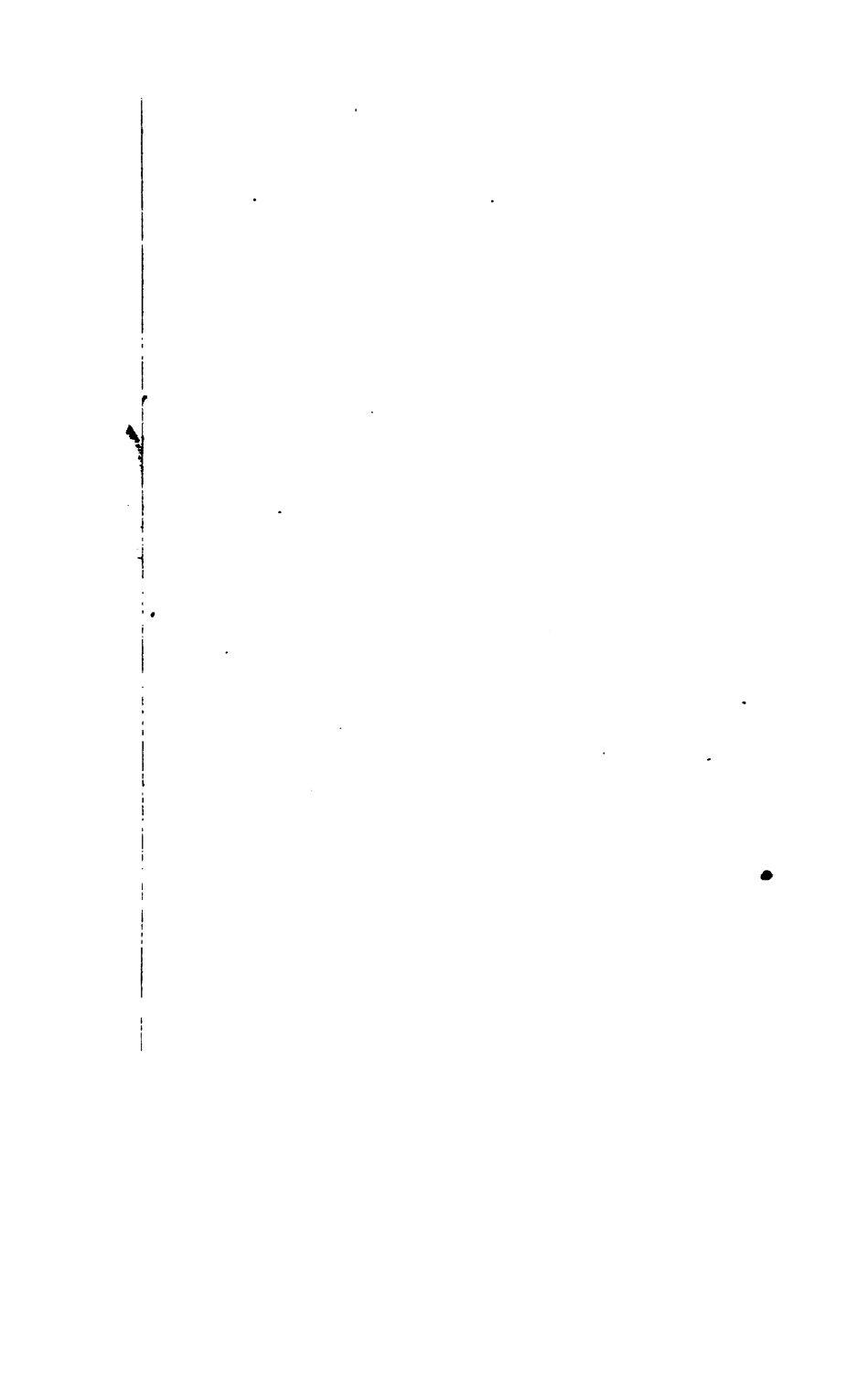
Mrs. A. Of the greatest use, when properly applied; but there are things, Mr. Dibbs, which even money will not accomplish.

Thorn. (taking Mrs. A.'s hand). And the conquest of this lady, is, I am happy to say, one of them.

Dand. (to DIBBS). When you're tired o' your money give 'un to us, we'll show him the use on't, won't us, Madge? (*To audience, importantly.*) And if any one ever rekvires the sarvices of a hinwentine hindiwidual or a hintelligent adwiser, D. D.'s to be found o' evenings on that there style yan — (*pointing to stile*) where D. D. will always do his utmost to satisfy his friends, and to give them the full benefit and adwantage of

“DANDELION'S DODGES!”

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[No. 24.]

A SLICE OF LUCK.

A Farce,
IN ONE ACT.

BY
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203 WASHINGTON STREET.

1870, Feb. 4.
Gift of
Wm. V. Spencer,
of Boston.
A SLICE OF LUCK.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Adelphi Theatre,
London, 1867. *Boston Museum, 1867.*

MR. TRIPTOLEMUS TWITTER.....	Mr. J. Clarke.....	Mr. W. Warren.
MR. BARNACLES.....	" C. J. Smith.....	" ——— Farwell.
CAPTAIN O'SLASH.....	" C. H. Stephenson.	" F. Williams.
JOSEPH (<i>servant to TWITTER</i>)..	" J. G. Taylor.....	" J. H. Ring.
MRS. O'SLASH.....	Miss A. Seaman.....	Mrs. E. L. Davenport.
JULIA MAYNARD.....	" Emily Pitt.....	" ——— Hunter.

COSTUMES.

MR. TWITTER. — *1st dress*: dressing-gown, drab trousers, white waistcoat.
2d dress: black frock-coat, black hat.

BARNACLES. — Claret long frock-coat, light waistcoat, dark trousers, black hat.

O'SLASH. — Monkey jacket, white waistcoat, blue serge trousers.

JOSEPH. — *1st dress*: black dress-coat, white waistcoat, black trousers. *2d dress*: valet's coat.

MRS. O'SLASH. — Muslin walking dress, light shawl, and bonnet.

JULIA. — Muslin dress, black lace shawl, white bonnet.

Time in Performance — forty-five minutes.

A SLICE OF LUCK.

SCENE. — *An apartment in TWITTER's house — door C. and R. and L., window, L. C., room well furnished. — Bell heard ringing violently, L. — JOSEPH runs in at C., out of breath; he is dressed in a black coat and trousers, white waistcoat and cravat.*

Joseph. Coming, sir. By Jove, I've just got back in time! What a deuce of a hurry master's in this morning, never knew him ring his bell before ten o'clock since I've been here. (*During this, he has hurriedly pulled off the black coat, and begins brushing it — bell rings violently again.*) Coming, sir; I'm brushing your coat, sir! If he only knew I borrowed his dress-coat after he was in bed last night, to show off at our Annual Servants' Ball, a pretty bobbery he'd kick up. (*Suddenly*) There! I'm blessed if I hav'n't gone and left master's Inverness cape behind me. Perhaps I shall have time to run back for it. (*About to go, but sees TWITTER at door, L. JOSEPH immediately begins brushing the coat furiously.*)

Twitter. If I may judge by your style of setting about it, Joseph, I should infer that you had registered an oath to wear that new coat of mine out.

Joseph. (*Aside*) How the deuce can he know? — (*Aloud and stammering*) Wear it out, sir?

Twitter. Yes, sir, you're evidently under the impression that you are hearthstoning the door-step, instead of brushing a superfine cloth coat, sir! Have you no respect for the nap, sir? Any letter for me this morning?

Joseph. No, sir. (*Brushes away at coat again, but TWITTER snatches the brush out of his hand, and puts it in his pocket — aside*) There was one came last night, but it's in the pocket of the Inverness cape!

Twitter. Have you looked in the letter box?

Joseph. Yes, sir!

Twitter. Have you felt in the letter box?

Joseph. No, sir!

Twitter. Then go and feel in it, sir! investigate it thoroughly, sir! in all its ramifications, sir!

Joseph. Yes, sir. (*Aside*) I must get back that Inverness cape somehow or other. (*Aloud*) Please, sir, may I step out for half an hour?

Twitter. What for, sir?

Joseph. Just to have my hair cut, sir.

Twitter. You're always having your hair cut, sir! Why don't you have your head shaved at once, and have done with it? Go along, sir!

Joseph. Yes, sir. (*Going — stops.*) Please, sir, the coals are getting very low.

Twitter. So much the better! I'm sure they've been high enough.

Joseph. Hadn't I better get in a sack or two?

Twitter. You'll get the sack yourself, sir, if you don't go about your business.

Joseph (*going out c., stops at door*). We shall want some butter, sir! (*TWITTER flings the clothes-brush at him. JOSEPH disappears.*)

Twitter. I've my suspicions of that fellow! he must have some motive, now, for telling me we're out of butter! It was only yesterday he asked me if I knew how I was off for soap: that looked queer! It's very odd I don't hear from my friend Smith, of Liverpool, — he has been trying, for the last six months, to find out whether my uncle Benjamin, who lived in New York, — when I say lived there, I mean died there, — left any offspring behind him, — I mean whether he *had* any offspring, because if he had, he must have left them behind him, — he couldn't have taken them away with him, conveniently. It's really a dreadful thing not to have a relation in the world. What's the use of having lots of money, if you've nobody to leave it to? A man naturally wants to see somebody enjoy it after he's dead! Then, to make matters worse, as it never pours but it rains, — I mean, rains but it pours, — I drew a prize in the foreign lottery, last week, and what's worse, everybody knew it! It was in all the newspapers the very next morning, headed "A slice of luck," and giving my full name and address. The result is, that I've been inundated with begging letters, like Mr. Peabody, and it was only the week before that I had changed my lodgings in consequence of an adventure that has kept me in a perpetual shudder ever since, except an occasional shiver! I was walking up Long Acre, or down Long Acre, it doesn't matter which, in fact I don't know which is which, when — (*JOSEPH comes in quickly c.*) Well, sir, what do you want now?

Joseph. The butcher hasn't been for orders, sir.

Twitter. I didn't say he had, did I?

Joseph. Hadn't I better just step down and —

Twitter. No, sir. (*JOSEPH goes towards c., then stops.*)

Joseph. We shall want some candles, sir. (*Disappears at a violent threat from TWITTER.*)

Twitter. Let me see, where was I. Oh, I know—in Long Acre—

Joseph (*putting his head in again*). Can I step out to see my aunt, sir?

Twitter. Go to the devil! (*JOSEPH disappears.*) Well, I was going up Long Acre, when I saw a female walking before me, — I was behind her at the time. I think she had the most gigantic chignon I ever beheld, a sort of sandy color, and as round and shiny as a new cricket ball. Well, while I was wondering if it were her own hair or not, down it dropped on the pavement. "Then it is her own hair," I said. Well, just as I was picking up the article, for it rolled a considerable distance, I saw the owner turn down a street and enter a house. The door was ajar, so I entered too; but I'd no sooner got into the passage, than I was met by a stentorian voice, with an Irish brogue, exclaiming, "Well, have you got it?" "Yes," I said, "here it is," holding out the chignon. "Pshaw," replied the voice, "I mean the fifty pounds,—hand them over, quick!" the thing was clear, the chignon was a trap, and I had fallen into it. "That'll do at present," said the voice, as I handed over my pocket-book with five ten-pound notes in it; "when I want more, I shall know where to find you." "Will you?" said I, as soon as I got into Long Acre again. "Not if I know it." So I changed my lodgings that very night, bought that pair of pistols, which I'm afraid to load (*points to box on side table*), shaved off my whiskers, let my beard grow, and telegraphed off to my old friend Barnacles, at Peterborough, to come up to me immediately.—I shall have him to protect me, in case the ruffian, with the brogue, should find me out.

Enter JOSEPH, C.

Joseph. This way, sir.

Enter BARNACLES, C., in travelling costume, and carrying a large carpet-bag, hat-box, umbrella, &c.

Barn. Here I am, Twitter.

Twitter. Ah! do my eyes at length behold my Barnacles? Come to my bosom! (*Runs to BARNACLES and tries to embrace him, but can't do so on account of the carpet-bag, &c.*) Joseph, relieve Mr. Barnacles of his luggage, that I may embrace my Barnacles! (*JOSEPH takes the luggage.*) Now take them to the chamber prepared for my Barnacles.

[*Exit JOSEPH R.*]

Barn. No, no, my dear fellow, I must go back to-night!

Twitter. Never again! no, no, Barnacles, I've got you, and I mean to keep you; you shall never leave me again as long as you live; after that you may do as you like.

Barn. What the deuce do you mean?

Twitter. Listen to me, you're in the oil and pickle line at Peterborough, aint you?

Barn. Yes.

Twitter. You smell like it, — and making a rapid fortune. Eh?

Barn. (*Aside*) He wants to borrow money of me. (*Aloud and shrugging his shoulders*) I manage to grub on!

Twitter. I'm sorry for it! I was in hopes you didn't sell a pint of oil in a week! I wish you had been steeped in pickles — I mean poverty — to the very lips!

Barn. Good gracious! why?

Twitter. I'll tell you. I'm older than you, my Barnacles.

Barn. Only six weeks.

Twitter. And unless you die first, as I hope you will, the chances are you'll outlive me, in which case you'll come in for everything I have! I haven't anything else, or you should have that too!

Barn. (*grasping his hand*). Generous Twitter!

Twitter. (*Aside, and after a suspicious look at BARNACLES*) Umph! his eyes twinkled, as much as to say, "the sooner you pop off the hooks, my dear friend, the better." (*Aloud*) Then you accept?

Barn. With joy! with rapture!

Twitter. (*Aside*) Another twinkle! (*Aloud*) But there's a condition, — you must shut up shop at once, get out of your oil, part with your pickles, and fix yourself here, by my side, as long as I live, and longer, too, if I live as long.

Barn. It's a bargain! noble-hearted Twitter.

Twitter. Yes, yes. And as the first step towards getting rid of the "shop," go and soak yourself in hot water, for you smell of it most confoundedly; you'll find my bath all ready in that room. [*Exit BARNACLES, after JOSEPH, R.*]

Twitter. Come, that's settled! Having taken Barnacles out of pickle, he's bound to *preserve me*! So if the ruffian with the brogue finds me out, I shall set Barnacles at him. I know it'll be ten to one on the ruffian, at starting; but that's Barnacles' lookout — as for his accomplice, the "fair one with the sandy chignon," I think I shall be able to tackle her myself.

Enter JOSEPH, C.

Joseph. Please, sir! here's a lady.

Twitter. Where? I don't see her.

Joseph. She wants to see *you*, sir.

Twitter. Who is she?

Joseph. I never saw her before, sir.

Twitter. (*Aside*) Goodness, gracious! if it should be — (*Very quickly*) Have you seen her behind, sir? I mean, has she got a chignon? (*JOSEPH is puzzled.*) A — you know, a knob at the back of her nob?

Joseph. Yes, sir.

Twitter (*shouting*). Barnacles! I want you! come here directly!

Barn. (from without, R.) I can't! I'm in a soak!

Twitter. Tell her I'm not at home, — if she don't believe that, say I'm out.

Enter JULIA MAYNARD, C.

Julia (overhearing TWITTER's last speech). Deny yourself to a lady, — fie! fie! Mr. Twitter!

Twitter. I — I — (*Aside*) If I could only see her knob. (*Making signs to JOSEPH, who is standing behind JULIA. JULIA turns her head. TWITTER looks at her chignon. Aside*) It's all right, it isn't sandy, — besides (*shaking the chignon*), it doesn't come off. (*JULIA turns again. TWITTER runs to door, E.*) Barnacles, you needn't take yourself out of soak, — I don't want you. (*Aside, and looking at JULIA*) She's uncommonly pretty, whoever she is —

Julia. May I take a chair?

Twitter. Two if you like, my dear madam. (*Aside*) She's exquisitely pretty! Leave the room, Joseph.

Joseph. Please, sir, may I just step out?

Twitter. Yes, and don't come back for a month. (*Exit JOSEPH, C. TWITTER runs to door, R. again.*) Barnacles, the longer you keep in soak, the better. (*Comes down to JULIA.*)

Julia (smiling). Mr. Twitter! I am about to surprise you.

Twitter. You've given me a very agreeable surprise already, ma'am.

Julia. Look at me. Well, don't you see any likeness?

Twitter. Of course, I do. Who to?

Julia. Can't you guess?

Twitter. Yes; perhaps I might, in time; but it would be a long job.

Julia. And yet I'm told I'm very like him!

Twitter. So you are, — only you see there are such lots of him!

Julia (giving letter). Then this letter must explain!

Twitter (opening letter). What's this? "Liverpool," "John Smith." (*Reading again.*) Eh! You don't mean to say you're Uncle Benjamin's offspring?

Julia. Yes, his only child! I have only lately returned from New York, where you know I lost my poor father.

Twitter. No, I didn't know you had lost him, — oh, yes, of course, I'm so delighted you've turned up! I'd given you up as a bad job, — I had, indeed.

Julia. Indeed, Mr. Twitter!

Twitter. What do you mean by "Mister Twitter"? Call me cousin! cousin Trip-polipus — I mean, Tripmolipus.

Julia (smiling). Triptolemus?

Twitter. That's it, and I'll call you cousin —

Julia. Julia! Julia Maynard.

Twitter. Married, eh? Then I've got another cousin, eh?

Julia. I am a widow!

Twitter. That's a pity! Any offspring?

Julia. No.

Twitter. That's two pities! But this letter's a month old!

Julia. Because when you quitted your old lodgings, you didn't leave word where you were gone to —

Twitter. (Aside) No; I took care of that.

Julia. But luckily I happened to see the paragraph in the newspapers about your "slice of luck," —

Twitter. Of course, I see, and in the mean time —

Julia. I had found a home with a dear married friend of mine, — they are very poor, but kindness itself.

Twitter. Any offspring?

Julia. No.

Twitter. Well, of course, now you will come and live with me?

Julia. Mr. Twitter!

Twitter. Why not? I pledge you my word and honor you'll never have to say "Adone, do." Never. (*JULIA shakes her head.*) Then I'll tell you what! you shall bring your friends with you. We'll all pig together, I mean, live together, in the same cage, like the united happy family. We will, by jingo!

Julia. O cousin! how kind of you!

Twitter. Go and fetch 'em at once. Don't stand any absurd nonsense, but bring 'em, or I may change my mind, so, (*singing*) "Take me when I'm in the humor, Paddy will you now," &c., &c. Now go along. (*JULIA hurries out c.; as JULIA goes out, BARNACLES enters R., and sees her.*)

Barn. A female! ha, ha! sly dog!

Twitter. No such thing! that's she!

Barn. She! who?

Twitter. Cousin Julia! Uncle Benjamin's offspring.

Barn. Indeed! you don't say so.

Twitter. It's rather rude of you to say, "I don't say so," when I do say so.

Barn. All I know is, that twenty years ago your Uncle Benjamin's offspring was a boy.

Twitter. I don't care two-pence what it was twenty years ago! Besides, what if it was? Look how people alter! I see what you're at, Barnacles! you're savage because I've found a relation; you don't like being cut out; you can't bear going back into pickle again! I'm sorry for you.

Barn. Never mind, it can't be helped.

Twitter. That's right. (*Suddenly*) I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll have my oil of you. I don't use any, but what I want I'll buy of you.

Barn. Well, I think I'll go and take a stroll before dinner. I suppose you'll give me a bit of dinner before I go back to Peterborough?

Twitter. Yes, and after you've got back, too! There'll al-

ways be a knife and fork for you *here*, as long as you stop there!

Barn. (going out c., stops). It was a boy.

[Exit c.]

Twitter. Pooh! a very likely matter I'm going to doubt cousin Julia's gender! Just as if Smith, of Liverpool, mustn't know more about the sex of Uncle Benjamin's offspring, than Barnacles, of Peterborough. The fact is, he's been so much among the pickles, that it's soured his temper.

Enter JULIA, c., followed by MRS. O'SLASH.

Julia. This way, my dear Mary, — don't be frightened.

Twitter. Of course not. As Cousin Julia says, my dear madam, don't be frightened. (Handing her down.)

Julia (L.). Cousin, allow me to present to you my dear friend, Mrs. O'Slash, the kindest, the best —

Mrs. O'S. (c.) O Julia! (Turns round to her, so that TWITTER finds his face close to her chignon, which is unusually large, and of a sandy color. TWITTER gazes at it, examines it with his eye-glass, his nose almost touching it, then gives it a slight knock with his finger.) Ah! (Shouting and stammering, falls into chair, R. c.)

Julia
and } What's the matter?
Mrs. O'S.

Twitter (rises and gets R.) Nothing, — spasms! (Aside) It's she! the fair one with the sandy chignon!

Mrs. O'S. (c.) Julia has acquainted me with your generous offer, — the more generous, being strangers to you.

Twitter. (Aside) She doesn't recognize me, — thanks to my whiskers that I've shaved off.

Mrs. O'S. And we accept it with gratitude!

Twitter. Delighted, I'm sure.

Mrs. O'S. But I'm afraid we shan't be able to enjoy your hospitality more than three months.

Twitter. What a pity! (Aside) And Julia knows this sandy-knobbed woman, — calls her dear friend! Can Barnacles be right, after all, about Uncle Benjamin's offspring's gender? And yet, this letter from Smith, of Liverpool. (Looking at it.) Eh! (To JULIA) This isn't my friend Smith's (of Liverpool) handwriting.

Julia. (L.) No! he had the gout, and somebody wrote it for him.

Twitter. Oh, oh, — not a bad dodge — (suddenly on seeing JULIA look surprised) — of Smith's! How is a man to hold a pen, if he's got the gout in his toe?

Julia. In his hand.

Twitter. I say, if he's got his toe in his hand!

Mrs. O'S. (to JULIA) How late my husband is. (To TWITTER) Will you tell me the time? (TWITTER takes out his watch.)

Oh! what a little gem of a watch. (TWITTER crams it into his pocket again.)

Julia. (L.) Can we be shown to our apartments, cousin?

Twitter (Suddenly, R.) No! I mean, I'll just see that everything's ready, — towels, soap, tooth-brushes, and so on. (Aside) I'll lock up everything in the house, from the attic to the coal-cellar, and then I'll find Barnacles. (Aloud) I shan't be long. (Goes toward C.; then seeing that JULIA and MRS. O'SLASH are talking together, L., he takes several articles off the table and crams them into his pockets, then goes to C., stops, then snatches up the coal-scuttle, runs out with it, C.)

Mrs. O'S. Your cousin seems rather eccentric, my dear.

Julia. (L.) As yet, I know scarcely more of him than you do; but he was so delighted on discovering my relationship to him, that I'm sure he's prepared to do anything in the world to please me.

Mrs. O'S. (L. C.) And you'll use your influence with him in my husband's favor?

Julia. Of course I will!

Mrs. O'S. Poor dear fellow! he's always full of some new invention or other which is to make our fortune, but which, hitherto, has only exhausted our little means.

Julia. And yet, upon his accidentally opening his pocket-book, yesterday, I fancied I saw —

Mrs. O'S. Five ten pound notes; yes, but that is a sacred deposit he wouldn't touch for the world! a very singular adventure, my dear, which I will tell you one day.

Enter BARNACLES and CAPT. O'SLASH, C., arm in arm. O'SLASH carries a large empty carpet-bag.

O'Slash (as he enters). Yes, my dear sir! mark my words, — one of these days I shall come out with an invention that'll astonish all Europe! I've got it here, sir, here! (Touching his forehead and placing carpet-bag on chair at back R. C.)

Barn. (R.) Yes, I think he has got it there, and pretty strong, too!

O'Slash. (C., to MRS. O'SLASH) Ah! Mary, darling! Mrs. Maynard, your most devoted. As for you, sir (to BARNACLES), much obliged to your agreeable society; but, as I've arrived at my destination —

Barn. (R.) If you come to that, so have I.

O'Slash. You don't mean that! Funny enough, Mary, I found my friend here in the middle of the street, staring about him much after the fashion of a stuck pig.

Barn. No wonder! London is so altered.

O'Slash. So I tucked him under my arm, and —

Julia (seeing TWITTER enter C.) Oh! here comes my cousin.

Twitter (as he enters). I can't see Barnacles anywhere! (Seeing him, R.) Oh, there he is! (Hurries down to BARNACLES.)

O'Slash (coming behind TWITTER and laying his hand on his

shoulder). Delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. Twitter. (TWITTER suddenly drops into BARNACLES' arms.)

All. What's the matter?

Twitter. N—othing! spasms! (*Aside*) It's the ruffian with the brogue.

O'Slash. (c.) Your delicious cousin has told me all. Give me your hand, sir. (*Seizing and shaking TWITTER's hand.*) You're a trump, sir!

Twitter. (*Faintly, R.*) Yes! I am.

O'Slash. I don't mind telling you, — in all probability, sir, you've saved me from being locked up.

Twitter. I'm very sorry for it; no, I mean —

O'Slash. And then there'd have been an end of all my clever plans and contrivances.

Twitter. (*Aside*) Yes; for seven or ten years, at least.

Enter JOSEPH, c.

Joseph. Please, sir, here's a man just brought a couple of big trunks, and half a dozen hampers.

O'Slash. All right, — they're mine! They won't break your back, young man, — there's nothing in 'em.

Twitter. (*Aside*) Of course, — he means to fill 'em here!

Joseph. Which room for the gentleman, sir, — next to yours?

Twitter. No; as far from it as possible!

O'Slash (*shaking TWITTER's hand*). Good-by, Twitter, I like you! I like you much! (*Exit JOSEPH and O'SLASH, c. JULIA and MRS. O'SLASH, R. TWITTER watches them off. He suddenly rushes to BARNACLES, and drags him forward.*)

Twitter. Down on your knees!

Barn. Holloa!

Twitter. Down on your knees, I say. (*Forcing him on his knees.*) Now, swear!

Barn. Damn it!

Twitter. I don't mean that! Swear that you'll never leave me, that you'll eat with me, drink with me, sleep on a chair by my bedside, live with me, die with me. Why don't you swear?

Barn. But I say —

Twitter. That'll do, — now get up. Why don't you get up? (*Pulls him up violently.*) Bless you! (*Embraces him.*) Now run to the first station, and take a couple of first-class tickets.

Barn. Where to?

Twitter. Yes, that'll do! Why don't you run? (*pushing BARNACLES up to c.*) And make haste back. Why don't you make haste back? (*Pushes him out at c.*) Yes, I'll give 'em all the slip, — that's my only chance. (*Turns to L., and finds himself face to face with O'SLASH, who has come in at c.*)

O'Slash. Very comfortable quarters, indeed, Twitter! The furniture must have cost you a deal of money, Twitter!

Twitter (*getting round to L.*) It isn't mine, — I've only hired it!

O'Slash. That's a mighty fine diamond you've got on your finger, Twitter!

Twitter (quickly). Paste, my dear sir. I gave two and nine-pence for it!

O'Slash. Now sit down (*TWITTER sits L.*), and listen to me, for it's only right you should know what sort of man you've got in your house.

Twitter. (Aside) He's going to confess! (*Aloud*) Well, if it will be a relief to you to unbutton, — I mean, unbosom yourself.

O'Slash (standing c. by his side). Twitter, I'm not an ordinary man!

Twitter. Quite the reverse, — you're remarkably good-looking. (*Aside*) There's no harm in flattering the ruffian!

O'Slash. I'm a man of genius, sir, in every way; but, unfortunately, I've never had a fair trial.

Twitter. (Aside) That's what they all say!

O'Slash. In short, sir, my life has been one of grand intellectual conceptions, sir, that ought to have immortalized me! Here's my last invention, sir, and a really beautiful thing it is. Look here. (*Taking a piece of wood out of his pocket.*) "Only a piece of wood," you'll say; what do you say now? (*A long piece of steel suddenly shoots out of the wood under TWITTER'S nose.*)

Twitter (shouting and jumping up). Barnacles!

O'Slash (pushes him down again). Sit down with you, you can see it without your barnacles. Now with this simple contrivance, I'll back myself to pick every lock you've got in the house! (*Sees writing desk on table, L.*) Here, hand over that desk.

Twitter. Really, I —

O'Slash. Never mind. (*Runs and gets desk from table L., takes it to L. of table R. C., TWITTER gets at back of table.*) Locked? that's all right, now look here, Twitter, — you can't find your key; say you've lost or mislaid it, what's to be done? break open your desk? Devil a bit, keep your eye on me. (*Inserting the instrument into the lock of desk.*) Click, there, the thing's done. (*Throwing open the desk.*) Beautiful, isn't it.

Twitter (shutting desk quickly, and faintly). Exquisite!

O'Slash (looking about him). Is there anything else I can operate upon? (*Suddenly*) Of course, let's have up the plate chest!

Twitter (impetuously). I haven't got any, all my silver is pewter!

O'Slash. The fact is, Twitter, my stumbling-block through life has been the want of tin!

Twitter. (Aside) It certainly can't have been the want of brass!

O'Slash. But now I've found you, my mind's at rest! And

now, I think I'll just take a stroll over the premises. (*Goes to fireplace R.*)

Twitter. (*Following him — aside*) I won't lose sight of him for a moment. (*Aloud*) I'll go with you.

O'Slash. Don't trouble yourself!

Twitter. I couldn't think of letting you go alone, — I couldn't indeed!

O'Slash. Very well. (*Takes carpet-bag from chair, R. C.*)

Twitter (*suddenly*). Allow me! (*Taking hold of bag.*)

O'Slash. No, no!

Twitter. I insist upon it! (*Taking possession of the carpet-bag — watching his opportunity, thrusts his hand into bag and feels about it.* O'SLASH goes up to C. TWITTER sticking quite close to him.)

O'Slash. I've forgot my hat! (*Hurries down again to table — TWITTER still at his elbow.*) Where the devil are my gloves now? (*Turning the things over on table, R. C. — TWITTER clasps writing-desk.*) I'm only looking for my gloves — oh, bother, never mind. (*Hurries out C. — TWITTER following close on his heels.*)

Enter JULIA and MRS. O'SLASH, R. door.

Julia (*as they enter*). But you are quite mistaken, my dear Mary, I have no wish, no intention of marrying again.

Mrs. O'S. (*R.*) Nonsense! you've mourned the late lamented for two years, which, by your own confession, is twice as long as he deserved.

Julia. (*C.*) Our marriage was certainly not a happy one.

Mrs. O'S. Then the more reason for your making up for lost time! I happen to know a charming young fellow, a countryman of ours, who, I'm sure, will make you the best husband in the world.

Julia. Yes! they're *all* the best husbands in the world till you marry them!

Mrs. O'S. All he requires in a wife is youth, beauty, and a sufficient marriage settlement; you already possess the two first requisites, your cousin will provide the other.

Julia. No, no.

Mrs. O'S. My dear creature, what's the use of having a rich relation if you don't make use of him? Now go along. (*Pushes her over to R.*) And leave it all to me —

Julia. But —

Mrs. O'S. Will you do as I require you?

[*Exit Julia, R.*]

Enter TWITTER, C.

Twitter. I've left him smoking his pipe in the garden; *there's* nothing for him to take there but mustard and cress, and that hasn't come up! I'm in a nice fix, I am! Bounded on the north by an inventor of patent picklocks, on the east by his sandy-knobbed accomplice, on the west by a counterfeit cousin, and

that brute Barnacles out of the way, by Jove! If the ruffian had only known there was a secret drawer in this desk full of bank-notes. I'll make sure of them at any rate. (*Takes desk off table, and puts it on chair, C., and opening desk.*)

Mrs. O'S. (coming down L.) Mr. Twitter. (*Twitter shuts down desk, and sits on it.*) May I request a few minutes' conversation?

Twitter. Of course!

Mrs. O'S. Will you allow me to come to the point at once?

Twitter. That entirely depends on what sort of a point it is!

Mrs. O'S. Have you ever loved, Mr. Twitter?

Twitter (still seated on desk.) I loved my mother!

Mrs. O'S. (L.) Pshaw! (*Aside*) I must exaggerate a little for Julia's sake! (*Aloud*) I mean that intense passion that captivates, enslaves, enthralls! O Mr. Twitter!

Twitter. (Aside) I wonder what she's O Twittering me for?

Mrs. O'S. Tell me, if you knew that a woman loved with all the intensity of her nature, but that there was an obstacle to her happiness, would you hesitate to remove that obstacle?

Twitter. Obstacle?

Mrs. O'S. In a word (*Seizes his hand, and pulls him off desk. He rushes back and sits on it*), there is a woman whose happiness, nay, perhaps, whose very life is now in your hands. O Mr. Twitter!

Twitter. (Rising, and carrying the desk at his back — Aside) I do believe the dreadful creature is making love to me. Goodness, gracious! can I unconsciously have fascinated this sandy-knobbed female? (*During speech, has gone round point of table, and got to the back; places desk before him, and leans on it over table at back.*)

Mrs. O'S. (x-ing to R.) Why don't you answer?

Twitter. (Aside) This is another trap! and no doubt her atrocious pal is behind one of the doors at this moment, with both his ears stuck in the keyhole!

Mrs. O'S. (R.) You must guess what I mean?

Twitter. I do! but you don't get over me, you shocking woman you!

Mrs. O'S. (advancing on him.) Mr. Twitter!

Twitter (still behind table). Don't come near me! you naughty, naughty thing! Who do you take me for ma'am? (*Speaking very loud and towards doors R., and L., alternately.*) Do you suppose I'm the man to trample the sacred laws of hospitality under foot, by wounding your husband, your excellent husband, in the tenderest part? I mean point! No, never! by the living jingo!

Mrs. O'S. Ha! ha! ha! what are you talking about, I haven't said a word to my husband about it; why should I? It's no business of his.

Twitter. (*Aside*) Well, that's about the coolest thing I ever heard.

Mrs. O'S. (R.) The fact is, she wouldn't like to marry without your consent.

Twitter. She? Who?

Mrs. O'S. Julia! she thinks you would object to her taking a husband.

Twitter. Object! On the contrary, she's welcome to take any quantity of husbands she thinks proper! I'll give her away at once! Where's the happy man! Produce the happy man!

Mrs. O'S. Ha, ha! Of course you'll provide the *trousseau*?

Twitter. Of course. (*Aside*) What does she mean by a trossoo?

Mrs. O'S. And you'll see that it's done well.

Twitter. (*Aside*) Done well! evidently something to eat.

Mrs. O'S. (R.) And now, how much shall we say for the marriage portion? — five thousand? — *down* of course!

Twitter. (*still behind the table*). Oh, down of course!

Mrs. O'S. You couldn't say less.

Twitter. I beg your pardon, I could.

Mrs. O'S. But you wouldn't *give* less to your uncle's daughter?

Twitter. (*Aside*) Especially when that daughter happens to have been a boy!

Mrs. O'S. Then that's settled. Julia will be so delighted. Oh, you're a very jewel of a cousin. [*Exit R.*]

Twitter. (*L. of table*). This is a settler! There's only one chance for me, to give them all the slip. I'll pack up at once, and pack off as soon as I *am* packed up! I'll leave London this very hour; I'll bid adieu to the white cliffs of old England forever, and bury myself down at Peterborough for the rest of my life. (*Goes toward L., runs back, takes up desk, and hurries out L.*)

Enter O'SLASH, hurriedly, c.

O'Slash. By the powers! I couldn't be mistaken! I happened to look over Twitter's garden wall just now, and there was my old friend Sharp, the bailiff, leaning up against the lamp-post opposite, and what's more, I'm afraid he saw *me*; he only wants twenty pounds of me, but that happens to be the exact sum I haven't got about me. What the devil's to be done? (*Enter BARNACLES, C., reading newspaper.*) Ah! here's Twitter's old friend; he has a comfortable look about him; in fact he gives me the idea of a man with a twenty-pound note to spare. (*Goes to BARNACLES and brings him down stage.*) I'm a man of few words! You haven't such a thing about you as a twenty-pound note?

Barn. (L.) You never said a truer thing in your life. I haven't! But there's Twitter! why not ask Twitter?

O'Slash. (R. C.) After his handsome behavior to me? No, I couldn't, I really couldn't.

Enter TWITTER, L., his travelling-cap on, and he carries a portmanteau in one hand, a carpet-bag and hat-box in the other, an umbrella under his arm.

Twitter. Now if I can only manage to — (*Going towards C. on tiptoe, stops on seeing O'SLASH and BARNACLES.*)

Barn. (to O'SLASH). Nonsense! Twitter's your man. (TWITTER listens.)

O'Slash. (R. C.) But I really don't like it; it goes against me to do it!

Barn. (L. C.) Pshaw! it won't hurt him! it isn't as if you were going to stick it into him very deep, ha! ha!

O'Slash. That's true! I only want to bleed him a little! (*Here TWITTER, who has overheard, falls into chair at back, L., letting fall portmanteau, carpet-bag, etc.*)

Barn. (*going up C.*) Then I'll try and find him; by the by, would you like me to be present?

O'Slash (*going up with him*). No! I'd rather do the business alone.

[*Both exit C. to R.*]

(*Twitter rises, and takes up luggage, and is going off, C. — O'SLASH returns and meets him.*)

O'Slash. One moment, if you please, Mr. Twitter, — this way, Mr. Twitter! allow me, Mr. Twitter. (*Hands him down stage.*) Now sit down, Mr. Twitter.

Twitter. (L.) I am sorry that a most important engagement —

O'Slash (*twisting him over to chair, C.*). Sit down. (*Goes up to back, R. C. for a chair, and sees pistol-case open on table, R. C., at back.*) What's here? pistols! (*Takes one, and puts it in his pocket and brings down chair and sits on it, L. of C., by TWITTER.*) Now Twitter! after a deal of consideration I think I've at last got my courage up to the sticking-point. (*TWITTER jumps up in a fright.*) Sit down! (*Pushes TWITTER down in his chair again.*) When a man has got an unpleasant job before him the sooner he sets about it the better! Don't you think so, Twitter?

Twitter. I — (*Looking at his watch.*) I had no idea it was so late. (*Jumping up.*)

O'Slash. (*Sit down, same game.*) When a poor devil like me, with lots of brains, but no money, sees a fellow like you with lots of money, but no brains, no wonder he feels tempted to commit a desperate act. (*Taking out pistol from his pocket and cocking it.*)

Twitter (*jumping up*). Help! murder!

O'Slash. Sit down. (*Same play as before.*) I'm aware, Twitter, it's poor return for your kindness to make your roof the scene of a domestic tragedy; but what is life after all? What does it matter whether you pop off the hooks to-day or to-morrow? And there's such a beautiful simplicity about it! A gentle pressure

on the trigger of this pistol, and your goose is cooked. Of course, I'm only putting the thing in a philosophical point of view!

Twitter. Oh! that's all, is it? (*Assuming a tone of swagger and forcing a loud laugh.*) Ha! ha! ha! still, my dear sir, although we all have a goose given us when we come into the world, — of course I'm putting it in a philosophical point of view, — still it wouldn't do for us to be cooking one another's geese when-ever we thought proper.

O'Slash. Pshaw! a mere vulgar prejudice, sir!

Twitter. (*Aside*) He calls murder a vulgar prejudice!

O'Slash. Then you mean to say you'll sit quietly there and see me do it! (*Flourishing pistol.*)

Twitter (*plaintively*). How can I help sitting here, if you won't let me get up!

O'Slash. Fie, fie, *Twitter*! when with a few paltry pounds you might save a precious life; but if you will drive me to despair — (*Gesticulating very violently with the pistol.*)

Twitter. But I won't! You're talking damned nonsense. How much do you want? What's your figure?

O'Slash. I'm really ashamed —

Twitter. Don't apologize! I don't care how you raise your price, as long as you lower your muzzle. (*Knocking down the muzzle of the pistol which O'SLASH is holding towards him.*)

O'Slash. As I said before, you're a trump!

Twitter. I am! but lower your muzzle. (*Knocking down muzzle of pistol again.*)

O'Slash. And if you could conveniently spare me a twenty-pound note —

Twitter. Is that all? No, I don't mean that; here you are. (*Takes a note out of his pocket.*) But first lower your muzzle. (*Knocking down muzzle again.*) Here's the money. (*Gives it.*)

O'Slash (*smiling*). And here's your pistol. (*Gives it.*)

Twitter. Mine? (*Rising, and aside*) So it is, then it isn't loaded! and he couldn't have cooked my goose after all! Oh! if I had only known it before, I'd have snapped my fingers at his muzzle.

Enter JULIA and MRS. O'SLASH, R.

Oh, lor! here's the rest of the gang! (*X's to L.*)

O'Slash. Mary, my dear, oblige me by instantly blessing that man till I tell you to stop! (*Pointing to TWITTER, they embrace him, to his great terror.*) And now you have blessed him, promise to remind me in two or three years' time that I owe him twenty pounds. (*Taking out pocket-book and opening it, about to deposit note in it.*)

Mrs. O'S. (*L.*) O generous man! but for you my husband would have been arrested for debt.

Twitter. (*R. C.*) Debt! a very likely matter, with a handful

of bank-notes in his pocket-book. (*Pointing to O'SLASH's pocket-book.*)

O'Slash. (L. c.) Hark'ee, Twitter! poor as I am, I'd starve sooner than touch a farthing that doesn't belong to me!

Twitter. (*Aside*) He touched my twenty pounds fast enough!

O'Slash. I'm keeping this money till I've found the rightful owner. About a fortnight ago I was expecting a loan of fifty pounds from a friend by a messenger; my wife had been looking out for him up and down Long Acre —

Twitter. Eh! what's this — Long Acre?

O'Slash. Yes! well, an individual suddenly presents himself, I think it's the messenger. "Have you got it?" says I. "Yes," says he, and puts a great big ball of hair in my hand. "I mean the fifty pounds," says I; "hand it over," says I, and he does! The man must have been an idiot, sir! a wretched, contemptible idiot! Don't you think so?

Twitter. Yes; I'm gradually coming to that opinion.

O'Slash. No doubt the poor simpleton thought it was a conspiracy to rob him.

Twitter. Yes; I did! I mean, *he* did!

O'Slash. Eh? then you know the idiotic creature?

Twitter. Well, I — (*Seeing BARNACLES enter C. — aside to O'SLASH*) That's he! hush! give me the notes. (*Taking pocket-book from O'SLASH, beckons to BARNACLES, who comes down L. C.*) Barnacles, there's your fifty pounds. (*BARNACLES, about to speak.*) Hush!

O'Slash. (*To BARNACLES*) Ha, ha! I can't help laughing.

Twitter. No more can I, ha, ha! (*Aside to BARNACLES*) Laugh!

Barnacles (L. c., *forces a stupid laugh*). Ha!

O'Slash. (R. c.) So you thought the whole affair was a trap, did you? ha, ha!

Twitter. Yes, you thought it was a trap, didn't you? ha, ha! (*To BARNACLES, who is about to speak*) Hush!

Mrs. O'S. (L.) And that I was an accomplice, — fie, fie, Mr. Barnacles!

Twitter. Fie, fie, Barnacles! (*Aside to him*) Hush!

Barn. (L. c.) Oh, confound it! I don't want the money!

Twitter (*giving money to O'SLASH*). In other words, he begs you'll accept it.

O'Slash. (*Xing to L. c.*) Generous being! (*Grasping and shaking BARNACLES' hand.*)

Mrs. O'S. (*shaking BARNACLES' other hand.*) Noble-minded man!

Barn. (*Xing to R.*) Well, but once for all, I —

Twitter. (*Aside to him*) Hush!

Enter JOSEPH, C., with a letter, and carrying an Inverness cape.

Joseph. A letter, sir, just come. (*Aside*) Out of the pocket of the Inverness cape!

Twitter. (C.) Eh! another epistle from Smith of Liverpool.

Joseph. Please, sir, may I go out?

Twitter. Where to?

Joseph. To a christening, sir!

Twitter. Go to the — (*Exit JOSEPH, C.*) What's this! "Uncle Benjamin — married again — left a daughter, Julia, since married." (*To JULIA*) Then you *are* uncle Benjamin's offspring after all?

Julia. (*R. C.*) Did you ever doubt it, cousin?

Twitter. Never! only Barnacles would have it you were a boy. (*To BARNACLES, R.*) A pretty mess you've made of it! (*To O'SLASH*) You shall stop here till I've had enough of you, I mean till you've had enough of *me*, and what's more, I place every lock in the house at your disposal; so pick away to your heart's content. As for you, cousin, I'll give you a wedding portion, and you shall marry the man of your heart.

Julia. (*R. C.*) But I haven't got a man of my heart!

Twitter. Haven't you? Then let me be the man of your heart.

Julia. O cousin!

Twitter. I don't want to hurry you; of course you must have ample time to consider, so I'll give you five minutes; and, in the meantime, I'll venture to assure our friends here present, that if our efforts to amuse them have been successful, *that* will indeed be a SLICE OF LUCK!

BARNACLES.	JULIA.	TWITTER.	MRS. O'S.	CAPT. O'S.
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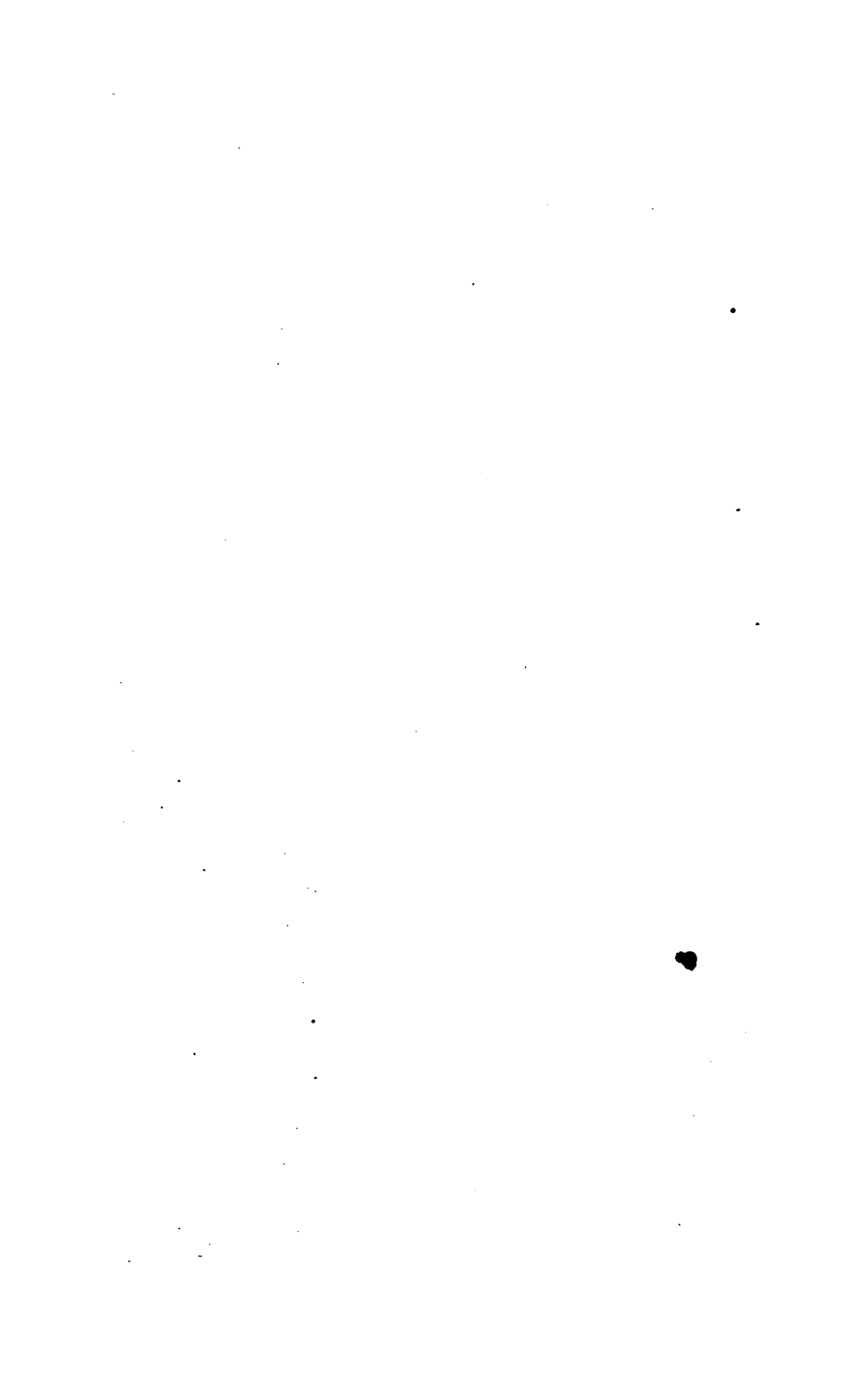
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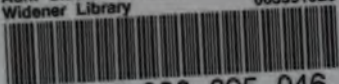






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